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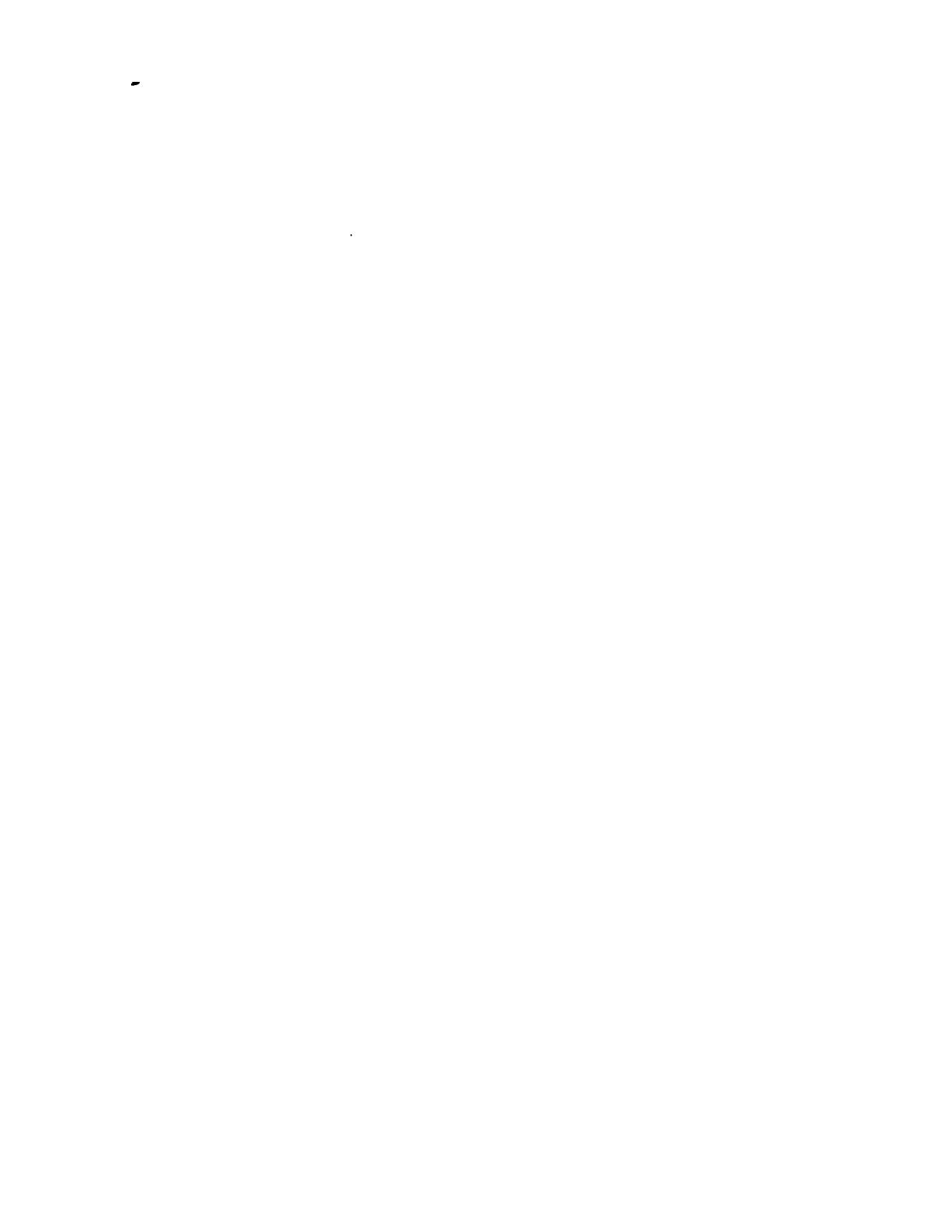


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HELPS FOR DAILY LIVING

BY

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The true hero is the helper

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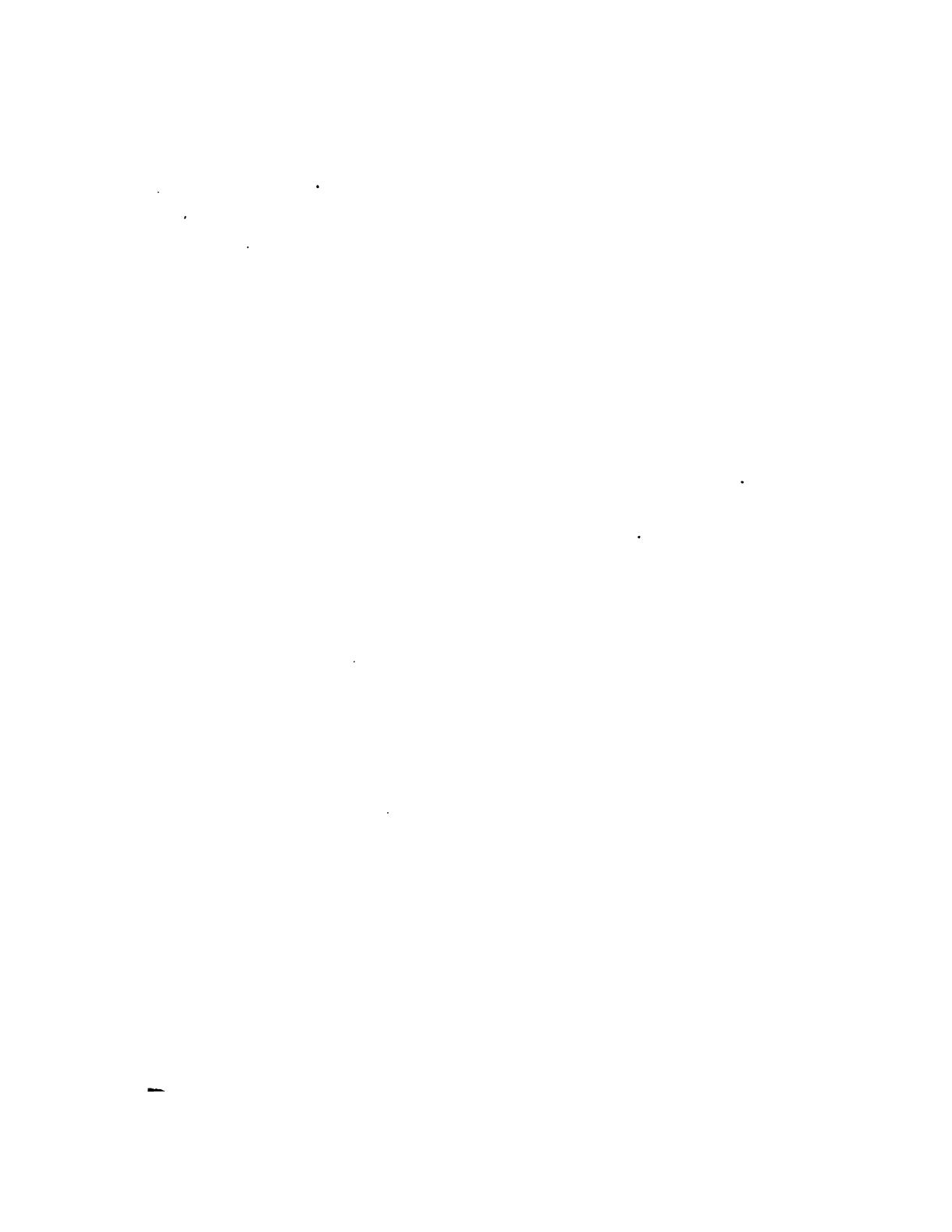
TO ALL THOSE WHO, KNOWING THEY CAN HELP BUT LITTLE, ARE
STILL READY TO HELP ALL THEY CAN.

4045



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LIFE'S AIM AND MEANING.

NOT a great while ago, I was engaged in conversation with a finely-cultured and earnest-hearted gentleman, who had been trained in the old religious faith, and who, I think, is still a member of the Orthodox Church. I found, however, that, in spite of these facts, he was sharing in the discontent, the bewilderment, the questionings, that are touching so many hearts and so many minds at the present time. He had been suddenly smitten with a great affliction,—one that had been great enough and had come near enough to his own life to shock his settled belief, and make him ready to ask the question, What does life mean? What is it for, he said, what is the outcome of it? Why are we subjected to these tremendous trials? Are they worth while? Is there any definite aim and meaning in life?

So people in all departments of life, in all branches of the Church, first or last, come back to raise these old fundamental questions; and we need, if it may be, to have them answered, sufficiently at any rate to give us a working theory of life. I do not undertake to settle all questions, to clear away all difficulties. I do not presume to tell you that I can see through the mystery of life and tell you just what is to be the outcome. I only tell you, as the result of hard study and thinking, that I have come to certain convictions; and these convictions constitute for me a practical working theory of life. There are no more objections against them,

at any rate, than against any other theory of life that I can frame. And this theory, or this way of looking at life, has the advantage of giving us standing-ground under our feet and, at least, hope for the future.

In attempting, then, to answer this broad question as to whether there be any aim and meaning in life, I wish, first, to treat of it from the stand-point of the world as a whole, as to whether we can see any traces of a divine aim and meaning, as to whether we have any right to speak of God as having a plan, a purpose, in human life. Then I shall come to the more personal question, when I have disposed of that.

First, then, have we any right to think that God has any plan, any purpose, in his management of the world? In old times, it was comparatively easy to believe that he had. When I was a boy, I was taught that we ought to look — each one of us — at our lives as being a distinct and definite plan of God; that he not only had a plan of the universe,—a plan of the world,—but that he had a plan concerning each one of us; and that, if we tried to find out what he wanted us to do, and tried to do it, we were co-operating with him in working out this divine plan. In old times, when we held that theory of the world concerning which I spoke last Sunday;* when we believed that this globe, which was not even thought of as a globe then, but only as a flat surface,—when we believed that this was the centre of God's universe, the most important body in it, and that everything else existed merely for the sake of men, that the sun was only to light our pathway by and the stars only to shine upon us by night; when we believed that God had created this planet only a little while ago for a very distinct and definite end,—it was easy, then, to think of God as having a plan not only for the

* See sermon on "Break-up of the Old Orthodoxy."

world, but for each person in it. I used to be taught that the world was created about five or six thousand years ago; that, as it was created in six days of labor, and this was followed by a Sabbath of rest, so there were to be a thousand years of labor corresponding to each of the six days; that the world was to exist six thousand years in the midst of the turmoil and struggle of life, in the battle between good and evil, and that that was to be followed by a thousand years of peace,—the millennium of rest,—and that then this world and its affairs were to be wound up, and this system of ours was to cease to be. That was the scheme of things that was believed for hundreds of years. It was, I repeat, easy to believe then in God's plan. We could think of that kind of a God. We could think of that kind of a world. It was comprehensible. We could grasp it and make it real to us.

But what has happened? We have found out that this world of ours, instead of being the largest and most important body in the universe, is one of the smallest in our solar system; and this solar system is one of the smallest among the systems. We know that there are suns thousands on thousands of times larger than ours, that our sun is one of the smaller stars to any person who may be inhabiting some other solar system away off in space. As Colonel Ingersoll expressed it once in his terse though humorous fashion, "We are only inhabitants of the rural districts of the universe." We have found out that this world is quite a small affair, that man, instead of being this special creation for this special purpose, that once we thought we knew all about, has been developed by natural processes from lower forms of life, and has come to be what he is under the working of natural law, whatever may be the force, the power, back of and controlling that law.

Now we have waked up to feel ourselves utterly lost in

infinity. We have a new problem to discuss, and it must be looked at in a new way; and, if we are any longer to have faith in any purpose and plan of God, we must get it in a different fashion from that which used to satisfy our fathers. They talked of all the manifestations of life on earth as being definitely planned and arranged just as they are. The eye was made on purpose to match the light, and the ear on purpose to match sound; and wings were created perfectly adapted to enable the possessor to fly in the air, and fishes were adapted to live in the sea. All the different parts and processes of nature were supposed to be planned in just this way, just as a carpenter might plan a house. The foremost argument for the old-time design—one that has played a greater part than any other in theological discussion—is that of Dr. Paley. His famous argument or illustration was based on the watch. He showed that the watch manifestly had a designer,—somebody that planned it. Then he goes on to draw the parallel between the mechanism of that watch and the mechanism of the forms of life in the world and to say that, if one of them had a planner, a designer, so must the other have had. And this argument, at that time, was considered conclusive. But now that way of looking at the question of design has been outgrown; and, should I to-day speak in the presence of any body of careful, scientific, philosophical thinkers, and refer seriously to Paley's watch, the only answer that would meet me would be a smile. If there be design, if there be plan and purpose, it is certainly not of that kind.

For what do we see? What does the evolutionist say in regard to this adaptation? He would say, of course, that the eye is adapted to the light because the year-long and everlasting play of light upon the nervous system of animated forms has created eyes, and it has not created them very well

either ; for, instead of the eye being the perfect instrument that theologians used to speak of, it is very far from being perfect. There probably is not one pair of eyes in a hundred that are normal, that are anywhere near perfect. They tell us now that it is the play of the powers and forces around us upon organism that has shaped and adapted organism. The Maine pine now grows in the north, not because God, foreseeing the climate, created and adapted the tree to live in these conditions, but because in the process of ages this particular tree developed a hardiness which enabled it to live there, and those that were less hardy have all died out. This is what they tell us now. So, if I should go to some far island in the sea,—a small island,—and find there a race of insects without any wings, instead of saying that God made these insects without wings and adapted them to live upon this little island, the scientific men would say that the insects which had wings with which they were accustomed to float in the air were swept off by the winds into the sea, and so only those which clung close to the surface of the soil survived, propagated, and became possessors of the island. So animals especially swift or strong, or whatever they may be, are the result of these long struggles for life. And, if any plant, any flower, any animal, any race of men, is found existing in a particular set of circumstances, it is because it has progressively adapted itself to those circumstances. It has been a successful fighter in the age-long battle for life.

You see, then, from this how the whole question of plan and design has been changed; and this, added to the discovery of the immensity of the universe and the natural origin of man, has made many earnest, hungry-hearted thinkers feel that they are all adrift in the infinite world. They know not whether there be any plan or purpose of God in human life.

But I believe just as much as I ever believed in a divine plan and purpose. I believe there is a drift, a trend, a tendency, through the ages; that there is, as Tennyson sings it,

“One far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

Let me hint to you this larger, this more inclusive, line of thought, so as to put my mind into your minds, if I may. Go back, no matter how many thousands or millions of years, to the time when life first appeared on the planet. Take that as your point of departure, and then run through in your mind the steps of ascent. For here is the striking thing about it, that life, beginning far away and at the lowest point, has been progressively ascending all the way, climbing from the horizontal forms of life represented by the fishes, up through reptile, bird, mammal, to man standing upright on his feet, with his face questioning the heavens. So much for the steps of physical development through the long course of ages. At last, man appeared, man differentiated from the lower forms of life by finer physical structure not only, but chiefly by larger brain and grander power of thought. At first, perhaps, he may have been only more cunning, so that he was able to outwit those swifter and stronger than he, and make himself king of the world. Then this cunning developed into the higher forms of intellect, until we have the grandest productions of human thought that have enriched the world.

Then came the development of the moral, the affectional side of man, a step higher, something mightier than brute force, something mightier than intellect. For to-day it is unquestionably true that the mightiest forces in this world are the moral forces; and they are growing every year, mastering the physical, mastering the intellectual. It is

felt in all communities that moral force has come to be mightier than armed hosts ; for there is not a single nation in the world to-day that dares to wage an undoubtedly unjust war. No nation dares to go to war without at least claiming that it is right, so that the military leaders of the world with their armaments bow themselves before the majesty of the moral law.

Above and beyond that is coming to be recognized the spiritual, that which links man with the infinite, makes him feel that he is a child of the eternal, makes him hope and dream that there is a thought and heart and life to respond to his own, the soul of all the worlds. So that there has been — this is the only point I wish to impress upon you — this progress from the lowest forms of physical life on through the different stages of what we call the animal life of man, and then from man physical up through the intellectual, up through the moral nature, to the soul. And the universe has followed this pathway from the very beginning to — what shall we call it ? You can trace it as clearly as you can trace a star-beam through space. The progress of the world for ages, up from men like Hercules, like Samson, to men like Galileo, men like Angelo, men like Shakspeare, men like Buddha, men like Jesus,— does it not look as though somebody meant it ? The power that can hold this universe in its arms and lead life from the lowest up a stairway like this until we see men like Jesus at the summit, talking about our Father in heaven,— does it not look as though somebody meant it ? Is a pathway like that trodden by accident ? I believe that a mighty power, an almighty power, an all-wise power, an all-loving power, has carried the world in his arms, and that he is leading it to some issue grander than any which we are yet able to dream.

I think, then, we may take it for granted that this first step

is clear, that God has a purpose in the world, and that this purpose is the culture and development of the spiritual life of man. It is that towards which everything thus far has tended.

And what beyond? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

We are ready now, then, to raise that further question which pertains to us individually, as to whether we ourselves can have a plan and purpose in life which we can carry out. I dealt with the larger theme first, because whether you agree with me or not, unless I could become convinced that the power who has made things and has led them had some purpose, and a wise and good one, I should think it a serious question whether it was worth while for me to have one. But believing that he has, and that it is a purpose of such magnificence and grandeur as that of which I have hinted, we may raise the question whether you and I can frame for ourselves a plan and purpose in life, whether we can believe that there is an aim, a meaning, in our lives, that it is worth while for us to discern.

The first thing that strikes us here, as in the other case, is the vast difficulty concerning the whole theme. So much of your life and mine was settled before we were asked to have anything to say about it that it looks as though the range within which we were able to plan was a very narrow one. I was not asked whether I would be born in America or in Africa, whether I would be born of white parents or colored, whether I would be born in a Christian or a heathen land, whether I would be born of intellectual stock or the opposite, whether my parents should have had any training so that they would care as to the training they gave me, or whether they should not. I was not consulted as to the kind of tem-

perament with which I was endowed, whether one of melancholy and depression, or one of hopeful, upspringing optimism, courageous and happy. I was not consulted as to how I should be trained and taught in my infancy and early youth. In regard to the most of us, we waked up to self-consciousness to feel that we were at last in some sense free to deal with ourselves, after the great main questions of life had been settled, without our being consulted concerning them at all.

How many of us even now have the power of realizing our ideals? Conditions hamper us. All sorts of difficulties beset us, over which it seems to us we have no control, until sometimes we raise the question whether we are free in any sense, whether we are not the playthings of a power so mighty as to paralyze our own wills; whether, even if we think we are free, there be not some cunning power back of ourselves that is playing even with the manifestation of what we call will, turning us into mere puppets. I say these questions perplex us, until, as I talk with this friend or that, I find it is in many cases a great practical difficulty with him. He says: What is the use for me to try to plan, or to have an ideal? I cannot reach it. I desire to work good and great things in this direction or that; but the instrument breaks in my hand, or my power fails me, or those who stand nearest me, and to whom I have a right to look for sympathy and help, oppose those things which I regard as best and highest in me, so that I become discouraged and know not whether it be worth while to try.

Yes, friends, I agree with you. The limits within which we are free, within which we may accomplish very much, in which we may seek for ourselves an aim and a meaning in life, are very narrow. And yet something we can do,—some little I can do, some little you can do; and the total of what

all can do means, in the course of long years, nothing less than the transformation of the world. Look back a few thousand years and see. The world a jungle; barbarous tribes lost in the desert, the forest, or wandering along the coves by the sea or the shallow rivers, simply to gather what nature has created to keep them in existence. There are no ships on the sea, there is none of that marvellous transformation of the habitable globe that makes up the material aspect of what we to-day call civilization. Think what this crippled, helpless, confined race of ours has wrought in the way of making this world a grander, finer place than they found it. They have accomplished results so marvellous as to make us wonder no longer that some dreamers dare to think of themselves as like the Creator who gave them the field for these magnificent operations.

How has man accomplished all these things? You need to note that point carefully. Man has never been able to do anything alone. He has been the child of God, the mediator of God, the co-operator with God, always and everywhere, when he has accomplished anything. He has simply found out some divine forces, that existed before he came here, before he discovered them; and he has co-operated with them, and through them he has wrought out these magnificent attainments. All the material civilization of the world means just so much discovery of the divine, so much co-operation with the divine. Steam, electricity, all these forces, — what are they? Man created none of them. They were here, they were operating, they were God waiting for man's discovery and co-operation; and, when he had discovered and had learned how to work with God, then he found almost anything to be possible.

So in regard to these grander things, creating not merely a change in our physical environment, but creating a change in

one's self, a change in one's friends, creating a higher civilization in human hearts and lives. In regard to all this, the method is precisely the same. Find out God at work. Obey God, co-operate with him. Just as a ship can be sailed on the sea, or a train of cars run on the land, or a message sent along the telegraph wire by discovering and co-operating with the forces of God, so I can create additional strength in my arm, I can create new powers of hearing in my ear, I can create new powers of seeing with my eyes, I can create new lung-cells, so that I can breathe more of God's vivifying air. I can change any part of the structure of my body. Tie my arm to my side, and it atrophies and withers. Exercise it, and it grows mighty and strong. So use and food for those parts of my physical nature that I wish developed, neglect and starvation for those that I wish to have shrink, die out. Give me time, and there is practically no limit to the changes I can work in my physical structure.

The same precisely is true in regard to the mind. It is true in regard to the moral nature. It is true in regard to the spiritual perceptions and powers that are in us and which are the most divine part of us.

This is what you can do. Decide as to what tendencies in yourself, what faculties, you consider worthiest. Decide along what lines you wish your nature to be developed. Decide what you will regard as the aim, the meaning, of life, and then feed those faculties and powers. Exercise them, and you shall grow to mastery. Find out those things that need to be pruned away, cut off, trampled under foot, and neglect them, fail to feed them, and you shall find yourself growing in stature, into the ideal which you hold as the one after the shape of which you desire to be formed.

So much we all can do, then, within the limits where we are free. We can find God's methods, we can find his powers,

we can co-operate with him, and so help ourselves to fulfil what we believe to be the divine aim and meaning in human life.

And one step more and one in the region of the practical. Just what shall we think ought to be the aim and meaning of the individual life? We are apt to be confused in regard to what worthy ends and aims are, when we look merely at the life that is right about us. Our neighbors and friends frequently by their course of life set up a standard that we find it difficult to get away from. The pressure of public opinion about us coerces us sometimes into ways that are contrary to our highest thoughts, our noblest convictions. We all desire to be well thought of by those who are round us. We find it hard to have them censure us; and sometimes it is almost as hard to have our friends censure us when we feel sure that we are right as to have them blame us when we are wrong. We love to be in harmony with our surroundings.

In order, then, that we may have a clear conception as to what are the worthiest aims of life, as to what is its deepest and highest meaning, let us for a moment glance over the past, away from the passions and confusions of the present, and see who it is, what kind of people they are, whom the world has always adjudged to be the ones approximating to a realization of the ideal humanity. Who are they? Whom do we think of as the great men of the world? What have they done that we call them great and good?

There are several grades of them; and it is easy to assign them their places, when once we get clearly in our minds the significance of these grades. There are certain men in the past who have helped the material development of the world. They are discoverers who have sought and found new continents, new lands. They have led other people in settling these new lands. They have been colonizers and organizers,

sometimes conquerors, who have put barbarism under the feet of a higher civilization. They have been inventors and men who have changed the face of the physical earth. They have made it an easier place for people to live in, given them mastery over the physical forces of the world, so that the conditions of this bodily life of ours have been bettered by them. These are the first. They are the lowest grade, because those who help men in the lowest things are the ones that render them the least valuable service. And yet I would not emphasize this too much, because the high and the low in us, as we reckon it, are so intimately linked and blended that we find it impossible to develop the highest and finest in us until we have made the conquest of the lowest.

Above the first grade I would place the thinkers, the men who have developed the intellectual side of their natures and who have helped others to develop their intellects, the men who have sought for what is scientifically true about the earth, about the heavens, the men who have written the world's books, its poems, its novels, its dramas, those in the intellectual grade. It is not easy to mark them off; for the one class runs into the other. But this class, roughly speaking, I make second.

Above these, highest of all, crowned with halos that speak the divinity of their souls, are those who have been distinguished for being good, who have illustrated, represented the moral, the spiritual, side of human nature, who have made themselves the companions and the inspirers of those who desire to live in the spiritual range. These are the greatest of all. In the light of this principle, you see why it is, how necessary it is, that we place Jesus first of men. Why? For the simple reason that Jesus has done more than any other man that ever lived to help the spiritual life of man. That is why he ranks above all others that the world has ever seen.

You see now, when we estimate what we ourselves have come to regard as greatest and highest, how we find ourselves keeping step with God's footsteps up the ages in the development of the world and of man. What God has made so far the crown and summit of his creation, the spiritual nature in man, we — though we forget that fact as we look back over the past — recognize as the greatest and best. And so, if we wish to find the true aim and meaning of our own individual lives, the key to it is here. Find out what it is that God has evidently designed and developed, find out what the unanimous consent of humanity has crowned as the finest and best, and seek to develop that in yourselves. Help your fellow-men in the range of physical need, help them in the range of the intellectual; but you help that which has become distinctively human the most when you help the moral and the spiritual life. And since your power to help depends first and foremost upon what you are, before you can render this highest and grandest help to others, you yourself must be. God says it then, man says it, our own heart, our highest and finest thought, say it, that the aim and meaning of life is the development of the soul. For what? That doth not yet appear.

THINGS THAT MAKE HONESTY HARD.

It is said that on a certain occasion the old Greek cynic, Diogenes, was found walking through the streets of the city, in the daylight, with a lantern in his hand ; and, when asked what he was doing, he said he was in search of a man. I have sometimes questioned whether some of his neighbors might not have found the search quite as difficult as he did himself ; for those persons who set out pretentiously with their personal ideals, in seeking for what they call a man, are perhaps quite as likely to be deficient in some important direction in their own characters as they think their neighbors are. But it is necessary for us this morning to have our ideal of a man, what we mean by all-round manliness, before we are able to estimate the force of those temptations that make it hard for us to reach and maintain our ideal.

I wish, therefore, in the first place, to give you some hints as to what I mean by honesty, what I mean by an honest man ; and then we shall be ready to estimate the difficulties that assail him.

As time goes by, changes come over the meaning of words, and we sometimes narrow down their meaning and make them one-sided in their application. So, in the use of this word "honesty," we are too apt to think that a man is entitled to this word, this name, who simply refrains from outright cheating in his business, if he keep himself within the limits of the law, or if he keep himself, at any rate, within

those somewhat stricter limits of respectability, of what his neighbors demand of him. We confine it, therefore, generally, in our common use of the word, to this matter of business. We say a man is an honest man, if he comes up to our ideal of what honesty requires in his business relations.

I propose this morning to widen the use of the term, and make it include complete manhood, no matter whether he faces in the direction of business, of politics, of social life, or religion. An honest man ought to be like a tower that stands four-square, fearlessly facing and defying every wind that blows.

To illustrate our point a little,—not to go into it exhaustively, but to make it sufficiently comprehensive,—I propose to touch for a moment on some of these separate aspects of honesty, that you may see what I mean by a man's being honest in these different departments of his life.

First, and most obvious, let us dwell for a moment upon a man's business honesty. What is business? What is business honesty? What is the end that ought to be sought by it, and that is sought by it more or less consciously by nearly all those who engage in it?

Business, of course, depends upon the simple fact that man, even in his most primitive condition, wants something that he himself does not create. And perhaps he is able to create more of something that is particularly in his line than he has any use for or cares to keep. So he wishes to exchange something which he owns for something that he needs or desires more. As I said, we find this state of things in the most primitive condition of the world. One man in a savage tribe will have an aptitude for the manufacture of bows and arrows. Another has no faculty at that perhaps, but has some special talent in the manufacture of moccasins or other article of use or ornament; and the one

who can manufacture successfully his bows and arrows makes more than he cares for, and exchanges them for moccasins or beads that some one else possesses and that he desires. As society develops, the needs, the wants, and the desires of men increase, broaden, reach out in every direction, until man needs not merely something to eat, something to wear, something to shelter him from the weather, a home, but he needs something to feed his intellectual life, something to feed his moral hunger, something to feed his artistic taste, his desire for beauty; and so the productive power of the world attempts to keep pace with the desires of mankind. Thus, naturally, as the world increases in complexity, there is division of labor; but in the midst of all the complexity there is one simple fundamental principle on which all honesty hinges. There must be equality in the exchange, so that the person who gets as well as the person who gives is better off than he was before. Indeed, in an exchange, each person both gets and gives. But the point to be remembered is that this exchange, however complex the process be by which it is carried out, should be such that after it is over both the parties to it are better off than they were before, or at least as well off. If not, then there is dishonesty somewhere involved in the process.

There is a point that I need to call your attention to for a passing moment. I have had occasion to remind you several times during the past years of the fact that this civilized world of ours is only a little way at any time from destitution. If there were no production, if nothing were added to the stock of the world, the world would wear out and eat up all that there is in the course of two or three years, and so perish. Here, then, is this stock of general good; and it seems to me a fundamental principle of business honesty that any man who proposes to take out of this accumu-

lated wealth of the world the tiniest particle for his own use must see to it that he adds something to the general welfare that shall be an equivalent, at least. If he leaves it no richer or if he takes what he has no right to, he becomes, no matter what his position, what we mean by a thief. That is what theft means. Rendering some equivalent, serving the world, adding to its legitimate amusement or welfare in some way, is the only honest condition for any man, woman, or child. Then, when you engage in the world's business, see to it that it is honest, that there is equal exchange. These are the principles that underlie honesty in business. I must not stop one moment for application, for there is no time.

Turn next to consider what it means to be honest politically. For what does politics exist? Government is simply the management of public business, public affairs, those affairs that are too large, too wide-spread, too complicated to be as well done by individual enterprise. What is the one thing to be aimed at always? Always the public good in the use of public money, in the use of public time, in the use of public position,—always the public good. And he who attempts to gain position for the sake of using it for his own private advantage, to punish his enemies or to reward his friends, is a dishonest politician. He who by means direct or indirect attempts to beguile the public mind, to turn the attention of the people to a false issue, to hoodwink or deceive them as to the welfare of the people,—he who does any of these things for the sake of helping himself personally or for the triumph of his party is a dishonest politician. Any man who interferes in any way with a free, intelligent expression of the popular will, in a popular government, is a dishonest politician. Any man who attempts to get laws passed which are unequal in their practical work-

ing, that help a person, a class, a clique anywhere, to the disadvantage of the public, is a dishonest politician. The honest politician is he who attempts earnestly to serve his time in a position that is honestly and manfully won. And the honest politician will stick by that motto which was uttered years ago, but that few people really believe in, that it is better to be right than to be President, better to be right than to be mayor, better to be right than to occupy any position of political power.

What in society? Who is the man socially honest? Not the man who seeks in any way that is within his power to gain a high social position, but he who recognizes that there are real distinctions among the people of the world, and who fixes his attention on that which he regards as really above him in the manly line of ascent, and attempts to reach this higher place, because to be there is to be more of a man and to be able to render society a nobler service. An aristocracy may or may not be noble; but certainly the man who happens to be born of certain ancestors, but who himself is neither intelligent nor true, nor fine in his feeling, nor clean in his character, is not a nobleman, however he may be born. I stop not to quarrel with society organized on the basis of money. If there be certain people who think that the only other people worth associating with are those who possess somewhere near the amount of money which they possess themselves, I have no quarrel with them: only I say to them that I cannot share their ideal, and that what they call high I call poor and not worth the search.

So, if a person seeks literary distinction, or power in that direction, merely for the sake of himself, he is not any higher, grander, nobler than he who seeks selfish power for selfish ends in any other direction. The same principles precisely must be applied.

Who is the honest man religiously? The honest man religiously is the one who faces the facts of the world, who does not shrink from the truth because facing it hurts, because facing it entails upon him present and personal loss,—loss of prestige, loss of position, of power; the man who dares to open his eyes and sees things as they are and then stand manfully, believing in the integrity of the universe to such an extent that he cannot consent to be anything less than honest; the man who will not swear to a creed that he does not believe, who will not stand in a false position in the pulpit, who will not sit in a false position in the pew, who will not cast his influence in favor of anything which he believes will be for the injury and not for the help of the world; the man who dares to stand by what he believes to be the real truth of things,—such is the honest man religiously.

These but as hints,—hints few and fragmentary, but perhaps sufficient to indicate to you my ideal of the honest man: honest wherever you put him, honest alone as well as in a crowd, honest whether he gains by it or loses by it, honest because he believes the universe is honest, and because he believes that this is the only way by which he can be a man.

Now, do not think for one moment that I stand here claiming to occupy a position of exceptional honesty myself, looking down upon and lecturing the world. Do not think for one moment that I underestimate the tremendous forces that are at work all round us to hinder our maintaining such an ideal as that I have hinted at. I would not have you think that I am above or beyond being touched by these motives. If I were, I should have had none of that struggle or effort that I have made in the past, and am making to-day, to at least keep in sight of the ideal that I have attempted to outline. I share with you and with the race all the hopes, the fears, the passions, the desires and feelings, and the stress of

those temptations that I propose to indicate, as much as other men. Let us, then, see what some of these temptations are. I shall class them under three heads, and point out some concrete illustrations under each.

I. In the first place, one thing that frequently makes honesty very hard, in whatever direction the temptations come to us, is the fact observed as we look over the world, that immediate success seems to be most readily gained by not being very particular as to the means. The manner of gaining immediate success and the motives the world is not very particular about, so that a man succeeds. We have a saying that "nothing succeeds like success." When a man is rich, you know as well as I that people, when they are invited to enter his parlors, do not look very narrowly into the way by which he attained his wealth. If he has succeeded politically, and has power, and you are either afraid of him or want him to help you, you do not stop very carefully to estimate the means by which he won the requisite number of votes. If he occupies a high social position, people are apt not to look too carefully into his personal character. If a person occupies a high position in the church, the people who sit in the pews, as well as those who attend the neighboring churches, are not very scrupulous to hold him closely and carefully to the letter of the bond by which, were he completely held, he would be bound to modify his position or to leave it. People overlook the means by which a person comes into a position, after he is there; and so a man says to himself, If I can only do so and so, if I can only win this thing, the main thing is gained. It is a perfectly natural feeling that people should be governed by the desire of gaining what they think of as welfare and happiness. Indeed, I do not know of any other thing that a man can voluntarily choose. It is our ideal of welfare and happiness

which we are all of us seeking as the one highest thing to be attained. Of course, most people, before they have tried it, are apt to think that happiness lies in social success, or political success, or religious success, or financial success. And is it not true that, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, people are spurred on with the thought that to win a position in the front rank of the work that they are engaged in is not only a laudable ambition, but the way for them to be happy? And, if they win it at the sacrifice of conscience, even then they say there are men who have done the same thing and who appear to be happy. So they are apt to be led away by this which appears to be the readiest means of success.

One illustration of the kind of philosophy involved in reasoning of this sort is in Browning's poem called "Bishop Blougram's Apology." Of course it applies to the Church; but it will apply equally to anything else. Two young men had been classmates, and had been separated for years. One had become a bishop; and the other had wandered round, meeting with very little success, with no position, having acquired no wealth, nor power, nor fame. Years passed, and they met again. The bishop invited his old chum to dine with him; and over the wine, after dinner, he lays out his philosophy of life. Half wise, half cynical, half sneering, he points out the fact that he has won success in this life,—fame, money, power, honor, distinction. I stand here, he says, on the pinnacle; but you, poor fellow, when you came to the point where the path turned, you foolishly allowed your conscience to interfere, and so, instead of taking the left-hand way to success, you took the right-hand way to nothing in particular. And, he argues, I have won this success, I hold it here in my hand; and the bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. But the bishop reveals the

fact that at the bottom of his soul he is an utter sceptic: he does not believe in the creed nor in the God he worships, nor the heaven that he has attempted to get other people to enter. He does not feel quite sure of anything except that he is a bishop; but, as long as he has won the highest success, he is willing "to chance it," as we say, concerning the rest. How many thousands of people there are who have gone upon this philosophy, and who have allowed their honesty to break down under the stress of this tremendous bribe of success that is close at hand and can be most easily grasped!

On the other hand, take a character like Jesus. Oh, how grand he seems to me when I think of him in the light of these worldly principles of immediate prosperity! How plausibly might he have argued: What am I really doing? I cannot lead these people, unless I bend and give way! Do you remember a certain occasion when he spoke out clearly his truth, that it is recorded that from that day many who had followed him went back, and walked with him no more? Jesus might very rationally have argued: I have lost my hold on these people by being too strict and severe. Is it not the wiser policy, the more religious policy, for me at least to keep my hold of them, not to speak too clearly? If I can keep my hold on my people, I can gradually mould and change them. Did Jesus argue in that way? It seems to me that a person looking at it at that time, not estimating the work since, might very rationally have argued that he was taking the most unwise course in the world; that, when the time came at the last, instead of having changed the religion of his nation, he was deserted even by some of the twelve, his own immediate followers, who had been with him from the first. He stood alone, lifted between heaven and earth, malefactors on either side, his work an utter wreck about his feet.

But what since? Simply because he was honest, because he stood by his integrity and uttered his truth, he has almost fulfilled that word which was spoken by him, or, at least, was put into his lips, whether he uttered it or not,—“And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” Think of the thousands that to-day are ready to honor him and his truth, who would have looked upon him simply as, what he would have been, a dishonest man, if he had given way one inch or surrendered one iota of his truth for the sake of immediate success. But I must pass, for lack of time, to my next point.

2. This is one of the mightiest of the forces that stand in the way of people's being honest, the fact that the man who will be upright, downright, can count on so little sympathy on the part of his fellow-men. This is reasonable, looked at in one way. The popular standard has the majority in its favor; and generally, I am willing to admit, it is true that, when a man differs from all the rest of the world, the chances are that he is wrong and they are right. But the simple fact that the world learns something gradually, and grows to better and better, is demonstration of the fact that now and then he is the one who is right, and all the rest are wrong. Were that not true, there never would have been any progress or growth. But generally it is true, and the man has to face that. Think how hard it is that he must not only face the fact that his own fellow-men do not sympathize with him, that even his friends perhaps think he is a little daft and wild, but that perhaps he must also face the underlying doubt whether he is right himself. How often there comes a case like this: a man in business, for example, starts out to be an honest man, and he comes to the point where he might succeed in gaining a large amount of money by giving way a little. He knows that the price of not doing it is to

forfeit his success. Perhaps his own wife thinks he is straining the point a little. Perhaps he hears her wish that she had this or that, saying, Here is one of my schoolmates now living on the Avenue in a fine house: you have never got on as her husband has,— hinting that perhaps it is because he is incompetent. Think of the temptation that comes to a man when he must face the fact that his own wife, his own friends, his own little band of sympathizers, as he hoped they would be, have turned on him with the imputation that he is either a little too strict or not quite as smart as his fellows, or he might have succeeded as well as they. And perhaps he knows at the same time that his ability is not less, but that only his conscience stands in his way.

Let me give you one or two illustrations. I take them from literature; but they are no less true than if I had taken them from life. You remember George Eliot's story of "Felix Holt, the Radical." You remember that his father had been the proprietor of a patent medicine which young Felix, when he came to investigate the matter, could not honestly believe in the virtues of; and so the question came up whether he would take the fortune involved in making it or go out into the world poor. And the question was complicated by the fact that he must seem to antagonize the honesty of his own father, and must, in conversation with his mother, as he is represented, put himself in the position of telling her that her own husband was either not quite clear-headed or else not quite true. Think of the temptation involved in a position like that.

Take the next illustration, in another of Browning's poems, "Andrea del Sarto," where the great painter knew that he had ability to stand with the highest, and yet fell from among the stars through the importunities, the vanities, the passions of the wife whom he passionately loved, but who

could not take his measure, who valued his art simply for what it could do towards the gratification of her own desires. Case after case like this must men face. Think how hard it is for a man to be true, for a man to be faithful, in the midst of temptations like these.

I think that the hardest thing, perhaps, in all the world is for a man to be true in his religious convictions when besieged by temptations like these. Picture Sir Thomas More in prison, when a word would set him free. His wife comes with her little children, and gets on her knees, and clings about his feet, and pleads with him with tears to speak that word, which is only a lie, and he is free, with wife and children in his arms once more. Is it easy? It was only a question of religious creed, after all. And perhaps Sir Thomas More was not right. Perhaps the majority of his time could have showed better authority than he.

Take a more recent, fresher case from literature. You will notice that I have not followed the fashion of preaching a sermon on "Robert Elsmere," but I shall not let that stand in my way of using illustrations from it. Those of you who have read it will remember the strain, the deadly battle for the truth, that went on with Robert in view of the fact that his wife Catherine not only could not comprehend and could not sympathize with him, but felt that he was being untrue to everything sacred and holy in all the world. What does it mean for a man to stand up for a conviction against all his friends and against the pleading and tears of those nearest him? These are some of the things that make honesty hard.

As I look back over the past and study my own life, I appreciate what this battle means to such an extent that I find it very hard to fling epithets at people and call hard names, or to be anything but tenderly sympathetic. And

yet, by virtue of the stress of that fight, I feel authorized to say to those who are in the midst of a similar battle that they have no right, for personal peace or even to satisfy the wishes of their friends, to be untrue to the noblest ideal of integrity which they can dream.

There is one other group of facts that I must speak of, to cover the theme as it lies in my own mind.

3. The third thing that makes honesty hard in so many departments of life is the fact that one becomes entangled in a set of conditions and circumstances before waking up to the fact that any dishonesty is involved; and, when they do wake up, they find themselves tied hand and foot. They find themselves committed in this way and committed in that way, so that they seriously question whether they will do more good or more harm by following a conviction. It is so easy for us, with our sober second-thought, as we call it, to persuade ourselves that the easier path is the right one.

To illustrate what I mean, let me refer to a gentleman I have in mind. It is not a case from literature, but from life. A gentleman who has had a wide reputation throughout the Union told a friend of mine something like this: I joined such and such a church when I was a young man, when I believed, or thought I believed, its creed. My children have been born and baptized in that church. They have grown up in it, all their associations are there, all their friends are there. My wife is there, still satisfied, still a believer. Her entire circle of friends is there. I, however, as I have travelled, read, and studied, have ceased completely to believe that which once satisfied me. And here I am. I am a vestryman in my church, I have held official position, I have accepted its honors; yet I no longer believe. What shall I do? How shall I free myself from this entanglement? how escape honorably? May I not do more harm than good by leaving it?

Take another illustration. I was talking with one of the most cultured gentlemen in one of our great cities within a week; and he told me of a conversation that he had recently with the most popular clergyman in a great city, a man who has the largest following in the city, an immensely rich, strong church, who said: "I have found that I do not believe more than one-third of the creed of the church in which I am preaching. But what am I to do? Here I am, the pastor, possessed of tremendous power. My congregation is rich. I can get ten thousand dollars any Sunday, by asking for it, to help this cause or that. While I am here, I can mould the thought of my people. I can educate them, I can help them to higher and better ways of thinking. If I leave them, I throw away this power. It all goes into other hands, some one who will not preach half as sensibly as I do, perhaps. There will be reaction. May it not be worse for my people for me to leave than for me to stay where I am?" You see the line of argument. You see how easy it is for any one to persuade himself that the position he occupies, though it be not quite upright, not quite clear in its integrity, is still practically the best. There may be cases where this course is the best. I do not feel called upon to pronounce any hasty judgment. I only do feel this: that, if all the men in this country to-day who occupy similar positions would speak out at once and step out at once, the world would leap ahead a century in five years. And, so long as I hold that conviction, I must speak out and step out, though I do it alone. I will fling no hard words at those behind me. I will only utter my conviction and stand as I may for what seems to me the truth, true honesty, in the religious life.

But it is not simply a religious temptation. This same principle comes to the man in political life and to the man

in business life. A man who occupies a position in the political world may persuade himself that he can do great good by keeping it, though he finds himself pressed into doing things, or consenting to the doing of things, that he does not really believe in.

So a man in business may find himself in a position like this. Suppose one goes into a banking house or a merchant's store, as a boy, and grows up in the business, and wakes up at last to the conviction that the methods by which that business is carried on are not strictly honest methods. But he is involved in it. His own business career is involved. He has his future to look out for, and perhaps a mother or friends dependent on him. What shall he do? It is not so easy as we sometimes think to be an honest man.

Now, at the last, one consideration, and one only. What can make a man strong enough to face all these temptations and go through all these fires and come out unscathed? He must have a deep-down faith in the integrity, in the reality, the meaning of things. He must believe that this is no haphazard scheme of which he is a part. He must believe that there is wisdom and righteousness and truth and love at the heart of things, with which he can ally himself. He must believe that there is a power controlling these affairs that is on his side, when he is on the side of right, and that in the long run it will be worth his while to stand, to be patient, to wait. If a man really believes this, then, though he sacrifices, he does not sacrifice the best,—though he loses, he does not lose the essential; for such a man is convinced that the one grand end and aim of life is the creation of completed humanity, a manhood that lasts when business is forgotten, a manhood that endures when our present social order is a thing of the past, a manhood that remains when political struggles are no more remembered, a manhood that is a part

of the religious life of the world, a part of the permanence of things, something that he keeps and carries over with him; something that all the world can minister to, but that he would be a fool to exchange for any or all. The only safety, it seems to me, for a man in this world is to carry in his right hand and in his soul that divine conviction. With that as a light, let him look over the past, and he will see that by common consent the grand souls of the world have been those who were fools enough to fling away their lives that they might save them. They are the ones who were right; they are the ones who are remembered. And, if we can believe that these, though invisible, are not far away, if we can realize that picture which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews so grandly wrought out,—that picture of one in the arena equipped for running a race, with a great cloud of witnesses rising tier on tier in the amphitheatre all about him, remembering that the one thing which was important for him to do was to win that race, the race for his own manhood, then he can hear and respond to the challenge, “Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, . . . and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus,—[and to all the great and the noble of the past],—looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him —[the joy of allegiance to the truth and victory with it]—endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.”

THE SELF AND OTHERS.

PRACTICAL life is an unsteady and constantly changing balance between the claims of the self and the claims of other people. And these conflicting claims present to us constantly varying practical problems as to which way duty lies. What rights have I as an individual? How much have I a right to enjoy? How much have I a right to study? What right have I to my own individual opinions? What right have I to accumulate and use money as I please? In short, what is the nature and what are the limits of my right to live out to its full extent my own individual life?

And here is the counter question : What rights have other people concerning my personal life? How much right have they to my time? How much right have they to demand that I shall sacrifice a certain quantity of my own personal enjoyment or my accumulated intelligence? What right have they to my own personal services, to my money? You see that practical questions of this kind are perpetually facing us,—questions of practical casuistry, each one of them having some peculiarity that sets it off apart by itself, and makes it a new problem to solve.

The tendency always is to one or the other extreme. There is this perpetual pulling, so to speak, between what philosophy calls the *ego*—the egoistic theory of life—and the altruistic theory of life. These forces seem to me to resemble in some particulars what we call the centripetal and

the centrifugal forces in astronomy. If the centripetal forces were so mighty as to pull all the planets and moons into the sun, the solar system would cease to be. If the centrifugal forces, on the other hand, were so mighty as to send each planet off by itself, in this case, also, the solar system would cease to be. No matter how brilliant any sun might be, no matter how brilliant any planet or moon, it would be as though all were darkness; for they would be so far apart that they would come into no relation to each other. There would be none to give and none to receive illumination.

Not only do we find this a practical problem for us to settle in our daily lives, but these two tendencies have manifested themselves in the world's religions, philosophies, and governments. There are, for example, certain theories of the religious life which make it the one great end and aim of each individual to save his personal soul. This first, this always. This is his prime duty to God, his prime duty to himself.

On the other hand, there are certain theories of religion, like some phases of the Hindu teaching, where the individual soul is considered as practically of no account. It is the *all* that fills the contemplative mind. The individual is only a tiny wavelet on the vast sea, that lifts itself into prominence, glints for a moment in the sunshine, and then sinks, never to possess the same individual life again.

Then, in philosophy, we find the same two divergent, antagonistic expressions. There are certain philosophers who say that the only thing that any man knows is that he exists and has certain sensations. On this theory, I am the universe, so far as I am concerned. I am the centre of all things; and all that I know is that I am, and that I feel.

Then there is a certain pantheistic philosophy, which cor-

responds to the pantheistic religion of which I have spoken to you, that counts the great souls of the world as practically of no account. This philosophy teaches that the course of the world's history would practically have been the same if the greatest men of the world had never lived. It makes them not creators of epochs, but only expressions of tendencies, so that the individual is swallowed up in the mass.

Then we have these two opposite theories in government. You are familiar with the terms "anarchy" and "socialism," and possibly, without thinking very deeply, you may confound the two at times; but yet they are the two representatives of extreme opposites. The anarchist theory is individualism run mad,—the right of every man, woman, and child to live out his own life. It would be the abolition of all government, the abolition of all contract, the abolition of the family as well as of the State. Extreme individualism would be the result. On the other hand, the theory of socialism makes the individual count for practically nothing. He has no rights which he is not bound at once to surrender to what is called the general welfare. He has no right to hold property individually, or even to choose his profession or trade. He has no right to go his own way in any direction. He is only a unit,—a part of the larger whole,—to be dominated and controlled by the central power which gives direction to this whole.

So you see that these conflicting claims of egoism on the one hand and of altruism on the other dominate the world, and in every department of thought and life are perpetually bringing us face to face with problems practical and theoretical for us to solve.

My purpose this morning is not an ambitious one. I am not to discuss philosophy or science or sociology with you. I speak of these at the outset only to show you how univer-

sal the problem is. What I have in mind is to talk familiarly with you for a little while concerning some of the personal aspects of this question as they present themselves to us for daily settlement. I want to help you to appreciate that the individual has rights and that society has rights, which are not necessarily in conflict, though they appear to be. I want to put in your hands, if I can, some principle that shall enable you to solve some of these problems as they present themselves to you; for it is my conviction that it is quite as possible for one to overestimate the duty of self-sacrifice as it is to underestimate it. And, while we are accustomed to say that the whole world is selfish, and that every man and every woman in it is dominated merely by selfishness,—I have heard it over and over again,—I believe that there are thousands and thousands who carry the matter of self-sacrifice to an extreme, whose sensitive consciences ride them till they drive them into that which is positively wrong, not only to themselves, but to others,—in the thought that the highest thing they can do is to repress and wipe themselves out. My plan, therefore, will include the bringing up of a good many typical cases,—an attempt to sketch in rough outline, but clear enough for our purpose, certain illustrations of the way these conflicting claims work in practical life.

It does not take us long to find the weak point in a character like that of the Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid, a man who attempted apparently to sum up in his own individual life the entire life of his age. He was a man who carried to extreme this principle of egoism, reaching out and absorbing into himself the life of a kingdom merely for the building of a monument for his own personal glory, sacrificing the personal rights, claims, conscience, enjoyment, even the lives of probably hundreds of thousands of his subjects. A man

who makes the most of himself along those lines and in that way, it needs no argument to show, comes short in the most serious way of making the most of himself. He masses that which is central in his own personality, and through the very excess of his selfishness sacrifices not only the lives of hundreds of thousands of his subjects, but sacrifices the highest life of his own soul, developing himself not into something highly human and grand, but into a monster.

Precisely the same danger threatens men in the modern world. I have in mind one of the most famous merchants of modern times, a man who lived, so far as the changed conditions of the world permit, a life substantially like that of the Pharaoh to whom I have referred; a man who crushed out all opposition; a man who hindered all rivalries so far as he could; a man who stood in the way of the development of all others whose work would in any way tend to compete with his own; a man who absorbed the whole life of his time in that direction, so far as he was able to do so, making himself a sponge, sucking up and taking into himself everything with which he came in contact and giving out nothing, giving only as a sponge when he was the victim of some outside pressure beyond his own control. It needs no words to make apparent the mistake of men like this. Not only do they not serve to the best their fellow-men, not only do they not recognize the rights and the welfare of others, but they do not in any true and high sense make the lives that they destroy minister to them that which is good for themselves.

Now let us take a case a good way off from either of these, a case the like of which we have known more than once in life, where, under what I regard as a mistaken sense of duty, some one spends her life—for it is generally a woman—in being absorbed so completely in what are considered holy

parental claims that she ceases to have power to develop her own individuality or to be a noble, rounded out, complete woman, or to live the noble free life that rightly belongs to her. I have in mind the case of a daughter whose father and mother are growing old. The brothers, if there have been any, have grown up and gone away. Parents rarely think of absorbing in this sense the life of a son, or, if they do, the son generally rebels and refuses to submit. But many and many a time does it come to pass that the daughter, claimed by the fond and over-fond but the not over-wise love of father and mother, feels that she has no right to live out her own life or to be anything on her own account. She is needed at home; father wants her, mother wants her, and she gives up her life completely to them. The time comes perhaps when the perfect flower of her womanhood might blossom under the sunshine of a perfect love, and she might link herself to another life and go on in her own way developing all the fine qualities of her womanhood and her motherhood. But under this sense of duty, this over-mastering claim of father and mother, she represses this love, crowds down that which is most characteristic and most noble in any woman, puts some tender keepsake away in a drawer, perhaps lessens the power of another life that had the grand claim of a grand love on her by a refusal, and sacrifices all this to this mistaken—is it?—sense of duty to father and mother. I do not say it is always mistaken; but I do say that time and time again this is pure, unmitigated, needless selfishness on the part of father and mother, and that they have no right, because this woman perchance is their child, to absorb into themselves all that is noble and grand in her, and make her life an abortion and a failure.

Here is one of the great questions. I cannot answer it

authoritatively in every case, but in many a one it is only a very sensitive conscience on the part of the daughter and overweening selfishness on the part of father and mother. Because I have chosen to bring a soul into this world, I have no right to do anything with that soul except to make that life, if possible, a grand success for that life itself.

Sometimes it is the opposite. Sometimes the father and mother bow to the child, son or daughter, to such an extent that the whims and fancies, the desires and passions, of the child rule ; and the life of father and mother becomes absorbed in the selfishness of the child. Here, again, it is a question between the self and the claims of other people as to which shall rule, as to where the limit shall be set up, as to which way the balance shall incline.

There are other cases. Sometimes it is an invalid in the home. Some one is ill, perhaps for months and years ; and in the sick fancy of this illness the invalid persuades herself that there is only one person in all the world that she can bear to have about her. And so this one person is only a satellite revolving day and night, month after month, year after year, round this one invalid life. Here, again, it is a question, and a serious question, as to whether it be not the duty of this attendant to break away. What right has one, merely because ill, to suck the life, the heart, the brain, the soul, out of another life, making two ill where there need have been but one, when the services are such as might be rendered by another?

Then it seems a serious question whether this loving attendance, so overdone, may not be an evil to the invalid herself. Go out into the wide world, touch the outside life, bring in something of the fresh sunshine and the air ; and not only do you help yourself, but you help the sick one better than though you devoted yourself exclusively to this attendance and care.

To turn away from cases like this, let us consider our public men. To a man who is in such a position that every one feels he has a right to come to him for service of this kind or that, the question becomes very practical. His problem is: Shall I reserve to myself some sacred hours? Shall I reserve to myself the right to study, the right to think? Shall I reserve for myself some time in my own home? Shall I claim, as other people do, the right to have a few intimate personal friends, a little circle nearer to me than the rest of the world, or shall I become a public pasture, where everyone has a right to feed? Shall I become a common, trodden by everybody's feet, and claim nothing for myself? I am not speaking of myself now, mark you. I am only referring to typical cases, true of thousands.

Again, take the case of the man who has made himself wealthy, who has been successful in business,—what shall he do? Here are the claims of the poor, of the sick, of a thousand charities,—claims in the way of public education, claims in every direction. How much shall such a man spend on himself? How large and fine a house, what furnishings, shall he allow himself? How much for his family? How much in the way of music? How large a share of his own estate shall he keep to give to his children? Where is the line to be drawn between the claims of the world and his own claims to that which he calls his own? It is not an easy matter to decide.

I want to turn now to another class of cases. I know I am going to tread on dangerous ground. I am going to say some things that can be very easily misunderstood. I am going to preach what a great many would call dangerous doctrine. But, if fools listen and fools interpret, I do not know of any doctrine, even the multiplication table, that may not become dangerous. This world is full of danger. You

are not free from danger any minute of your lives. The only way that you can escape danger is to go out of the world. I am going to speak about the relation between husband and wife, as to what constitutes true marriage, and as to what are the rights and the claims of husband and wife on each other.

Suppose a wife has high and grand ideals, and that she marries a man who lacks them. You remember that Tennyson says in such a case, in "Locksley Hall,"—

"As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down."

Will it? Must it? Should it? Suppose the husband is an exacting and selfish man, who claims that he cannot be happy except as the life of his wife becomes absorbed in his own and in his own way of living. There are such cases. Is it her duty, for the sake of making him contented with his selfish life, to sacrifice all the higher and grander things in herself? I do not believe it is. I believe that that whole theory of marriage is barbarous from beginning to end.

How did the husband in old times acquire a wife? Frequently, he did it with a club as the result of pursuit. Later, he did it by purchase; and he does it sometimes that way now. But, when he had gained his wife, he felt, and the great majority of men feel still, that the wife is his property. They are not very willing to turn it round, and let the woman say that the husband is her property, though that claim is made as exactingly sometimes on the one side as the other. I believe that there will never be true marriage, and that the question, "Is marriage a failure?" will never be settled, till men and women become civilized enough to recognize the rights of the personality of both husband and wife; and that neither the man nor the woman has any right, because

they are married, to invade the sacredness of that personality, any more than, because New York and Massachusetts are united as a part of this great Union, the militia of one has the right to invade the soil of the other without permission. I believe that any true marriage means a perfect, self-centred, roundly developed womanhood and a perfect, self-centred, roundly developed manhood, and then cordial, willing, voluntary co-operation. Anything short of that is degradation.

I believe, then, that both the man and the woman should be free, free as the air, to live out his and her individual, intellectual, spiritual life, and to hold his own or her own way. If I had a wife that I had to tie either by a cord or by fear, or by persistent pestering when I was out of her sight, I would—certainly not hold her by force, either physical or spiritual. If husbands and wives cannot hold each other by mutual loving respect and mutual tenderness, then marriage most certainly in their cases is a failure.

But suppose,—and here I tread more dangerous ground still,—suppose either the husband or wife find that they have tastes that lead them in different directions, and that bring them into association, even intimate association, with other people, men or women to whom they are not married, and are not likely to be,—what then? I do not believe that any man or any woman has a right to starve a certain faculty or quality of mind of wife or husband for the simple reason that they have no taste in that direction. Why, if the husband and wife were mere echoes, duplicates of each other, what a monotonous life it would be! By as much as the wife differs from her husband, by as much as the husband differs from the wife, by as much as each is developed on some side of the nature that the other is not, perhaps hardly understands, by so much does the common life become larger, richer,

finer, higher, because of this variety. True marriage ought to be like twin stars in the heavens. You would not, if you could, have one fall into and become absorbed in the other. Let the two swing and shine together in their one sphere, each with its own peculiar brilliance ; and then the heavens become glorious.

These are illustrations of what we find in every direction all over the world, practical questions. The question came up, and it is fresh in your minds this morning, in the case of Robert Elsmere and his wife. I have heard a good many women say,—and I do not agree with them,—that they think Catherine was all wrong, and that, for the sake of peace and helping her husband,—“and, if she had loved him, she would have done it,”—she should have surrendered her sacred convictions, and have become simply an instrument for him to play on. I do not believe it. Catherine is not a woman I should have cared to marry ; but she is a grand woman. She was true and noble, and she lived her own life ; and, if there were a Robert Elsmere who had passed over into the other life and could look back upon a Catherine here, he would have loved her all the more truly because she was woman enough to be her own self.

Take one more case in this direction,—a case like that of John Stuart Mill. Mill came into such personal relations with the life of another woman as made him believe that he had never lived until he met her. Those relations were every way noble. Nobody in all the world ever dared question the nobility of them ; and he felt, as he got towards the end of his life, that all the best that he had ever done he owed to Mrs. Taylor. Suppose there had been narrow, petty jealousy, so as to have starved the life of this great man, who found here a well-spring and source of inspiration. Friends, we shall be civilized by and by ; and then we shall

look back to this theory of ours, according to which we claim to selfishly absorb into our own lives the individuality of another, and shall know it for what it is,—barbarism.

I must not stop for more illustrations. I have purposely spent the bulk of my time upon them, however, because they are the problems that meet us. It only needs a little time now for me to lead you to the consideration of the principle that seems to me to hold in itself the practical solution for which we are in search.

No man can live alone. "No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself." No man has a right to lead his own life without any regard to the claims of others. As I have told you before, and now tell you again, there is not one single thing that makes the completeness, the value, the grandeur, the glory, the beauty of your life, that you do not owe to the men and women who have already lived. Are you capable of disregarding this obligation? The very physical development that makes your life, your strength, your beauty, is a gift. The moral nature which you possess is a gift which you owe to the past, to humanity. Everything that makes life worth living you owe to the past. Even the hermit who goes off by himself in solitude to-day takes with him, as the gift of the society that he deserts, everything that makes solitude tolerable. Byron might sing,—

"There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar";

but Byron's enjoyment of the sea, his interpretation of the music, all that made him capable of finding this society when alone, he had received as a gift from this toiling mankind of ours.

Not only that, but you need others every moment of your lives. You cannot live apart. You cannot stand alone. If

you have written a book, you need readers. If you have painted a picture, you need some one to see it. If you have sung a song, you want some one to hear it. If you preach a sermon, what is it without an audience? What is anything in your life apart from the relation in which you stand to other people?

Then, suppose you wish to develop this personality, this individuality, to its highest and finest point: you could not do it alone. What are those qualities in us which we speak of as human, as divine? Are they not sympathy, generosity, pity, tenderness, the desire to help? Are they not those things that have been developed in relationship with other people, and that cannot be developed in any other way? So that, in the work of developing this personality, you must be surrounded by your fellows, touching elbows, clasping hands with your fellow-men.

But here is the other side of it,—you have a right to your own life, and the development of your own person and the culture of your own brain, soul, and your own enjoyment. Here are two personalities. Suppose one sacrifices to the other. So far as the universe is concerned, it is probably a matter of indifference which does this. Each person has a right to his own happiness even.

You have a right not only, but, if you are going to be successful, you are under obligation to develop yourself. Who can teach except those who have learned? Who can give money except those who have acquired it? And, if you give away all the money you have, then how can you help? You may even become a burden upon other people, and injure them instead of helping. If you are going to help, then you must make yourself strong. If you are going to lead any one, you must study by yourself, and learn to know the way. If you are going to be of service to the world, you

must cultivate and develop your own personality and assert your own selfhood.

What, then, is the ideal of the world? What is it that we are struggling to attain along this uneven path? It is not the development of self to the exclusion of others. It is not the development of the rights of others to the suppression of the self. Society means simply an organization of millions of selves, of individualities, of persons. And society can be perfect only in that day when all the individualities that compose it are perfect. So that the solution of this problem is the development, the culture of the individual, the completion of the personality, and then a right relation, a balance between all these personalities.

So we end where we began, with our illustration from the solar system, in which there shall be sun and planet and moon, differing in size and bulk, differing in glory, differing in the service they render to each other, yet each perfectly related to each according to size, according to brilliancy, all giving, all receiving, all balanced, so that they make up the perfect music of the spheres.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

THE problem of evil,—I need not state it. You are familiar with it in a thousand forms; and perpetually, day by day, year after year, is it in your thinking a practical problem, making you wonder as to the method by which the world is governed,—making you wonder as to whether there is, indeed, a good power above us and around us, whether the affairs of the world are in the hands of might, of wisdom, and of love. It is not strange that the question comes up and recurs year after year. To see a man like Keats, dying at the very beginning of his life, and asking that his epitaph should be, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water"; to think of a man like Theodore Parker, stricken down in mid-life, when his usefulness might have been expected to continue, with ever-increasing power, for many a long year; to hear of a cyclone that has fallen upon a village, destroying property and life, good and bad, young and old, indiscriminately; to know of a fever or pestilence that infects a large district; to read about an earthquake shaking the foundations of a city and destroying the work and the hopes of years; to hear of a ship relentlessly pursued by pitiless storm, and, while the sailors are helplessly crying out to the heavens that seem not to hear, to know that it goes down, devoured by the hungry waves; to see a mother bending over her little child, watching over it day by day, week by week, while it wastes away, her life one prayer that

the loved one may not be torn out of her arms ; to see a young husband bereft of the one person in all the world that he loves with a perfect devotion ; to see little children, with father and mother both taken away, left in poverty, left in wretchedness, left to grow up in the midst of crime, not only to face physical suffering, but moral deterioration ; to hear the crack of the slave whip ; to see some man living in affluence, surrounded by luxury, when you know that every dollar spent means a separate dishonesty, means deprivation for some one else,—to see these things and a hundred things that these will suggest, it is no wonder that the question is raised as to the government of the world. The presence of evil and suffering is a problem to be solved, if we can.

Before proposing a way of looking at these things, I wish to recall to you some attempts, in the theories the world has made in the past and is making to-day, to see whether there is any light in them, any hope.

In the far-off times,—the early ages of the world, before men had risen to the conception of the unity of this great universe,—they believed in a multiplicity of gods. It was easy for them on that theory to explain the evil of the world. All fair things, all sweet things, all good things, all bright things, were gifts of some loving, invisible power, some god that was friendly. The lightning-stroke, the destruction of a crop, the death of a child,—all the calamities that came upon them,—were the work of some one of the innumerable bad gods, the malicious deities, those who took delight in human pain ; for they created in their fancy all these invisible powers about them corresponding, answering, to all the varied experiences of their lives. Of course, this was only a temporary theory.

As the world grew wiser, men could not believe in this

diversity of supreme power ; and so that explanation passed away. There was a little time — brief, of short duration — when the highest and grandest thinkers among the Hebrews had a glimpse of that which I cannot help thinking is the true theory ; but they did not retain their vision long. One of the old prophets asserts that it is the one God who is the author both of the good and of the evil of life, and that he has a purpose, a meaning, in it. “I form the light, and create darkness : I make peace, and create evil : I, the Lord, do all these things.” So the old prophet Isaiah represents Jehovah as saying. But this was only a very brief glimpse.

The Jewish people came in contact with the Persians during the years of their captivity, and borrowed from them the germs of our modern devil. The Persians believed in a dualism ; that there were two gods, one of them good and the other bad ; that they were in perpetual conflict, one of them being the author and giver of all the good things and the other of all the evil things of life. And they had a dim conception of a fate or power holding within his control both of these lesser gods ; and so they dreamed of an ultimate consummation of all things, when all evil should disappear, having served its purpose, and the good should be supreme. The Jews borrowed so much of this idea of dualism as to dream of an archangel, rebellious in heaven, who became the enemy and tempter of mankind ; and from his influence evil and sorrow and all that men deplore came into the world.

The ancient Greeks had also a conception of this dualism. There was old Zeus, sitting on Olympus, caring little for men, treating them with despite, jealous of their prosperity ; and there was the good Prometheus, who stole the fire from the gods, and brought it down to men, to help them and give them the means of lifting themselves up above the poor

estate in which the gods had allowed them for ages to remain. This conception of a modified dualism which the Jews accepted has become the dominant theory of Christendom,—the belief not only in an omnipotent, all-wise, all-loving God, but also in the existence of this fallen archangel, who seems at times to be mighty enough to defy even God's omnipotence, and who is the source of all the evils that afflict mankind.

Can we rest in a theory like that? No; for it relieves God not one whit of the responsibility. If there be a devil, he is of God's special creation or permission; and, in either case, God must be ultimately responsible for all his work. And if the evil work that he is permitted to carry on among men is to have eternal results, then is the good and all-wise and all-loving God to be forever stained with the imputation of either creating on purpose or permitting everlasting evil to his own children. The wisdom, the justice, the love, of the human heart, will no longer bear a theory like that. So we get no peace, no help, in such an attempt at a solution of the problem of evil.

There are other theories of the world,—the theory of the atheist that there is no God; that we are in the hands of an apparently almighty, but not an all-wise nor all-good Power; that there is no thought, no purpose, no goodness, in it all. On that theory, of course, there is no solution of the problem of evil. We must simply face the facts of life as bravely as we can, get what little good we can out of it, enjoy what glimpses of beauty are permitted us, snatch what taste of love we may, and then end it all in the dust. There is no purpose, no meaning, no justice, no hope.

Then there is the theory, very popular among scientific men, not of the atheist, but of the agnostic. The agnostic takes a modest tone. He does not assume that there is no

God, but says: I do not know whether there is or not. The world has never been able to find out. I do not believe the world ever can find out. Is there any future life, any outcome of all this scene of struggle, of sorrow, of tears? Again, he says, I do not know, nobody knows, nobody has ever discovered; and the probability is that nobody ever will. He puts the question of God and of a future life one side as insoluble. Is there any comfort in this theory? I am not raising the question whether it is true, but whether it gives us any help in solving the great problem of evil. Practically, it leaves us just where we were on the atheist's theory of things. We do not know. We look up into the heavens, and they are empty. We cry out, and they are dumb. We stand before the curtain that shuts us off from that which is beyond the grave, if there be anything. We try to lift a corner of that curtain, but we see only darkness. We bend down our ear to listen, but we hear not even a whisper. So, again, on this theory, we must simply be stoical when we face sorrow and are compelled to consider it. The wisest of all is he who can forget it; for really it does not make a great deal of difference if there is to be no outcome, if there is nothing beyond. We must just take what good we can, gather a flower, if it be within our reach, as we go along our pathway,—a pathway which begins nowhere and ends nowhere, and that many will think it hardly worth while to travel, after all.

These theories, whatever may be their grandeur, whatever arguments may be brought to their support, give us no practical help as we face the problem of sorrow, as we see the eyes dim with tears. They do not help us.

Is there any theory that can help us? I think there is. I think it is the enlargement, the completion, of that theory uttered by the prophet Isaiah, a brief vision of which was attained by the old Jewish seer.

What is it? It assumes that God exists, that he is almighty, that he is all-wise, that he is all-loving, in spite of the apparent contradictions which disturb us. If it be logical, it must face every one of the facts that I have hinted and a thousand more. It must not dare to blink one of them. It must dare, further, to say that even the most discouraging fact is a part of God's plan. If it dare not say that, then there is no logic in it.

But let us assume, for a moment, that God exists, that he is all-powerful, that he is all-wise, that he is all-good. Then let us assume that, on the whole and in the long run, this is just about the kind of world that God intended. Let us complete it by supposing that we are journeying towards some outcome good enough to justify the total process through which we are passing. This, at any rate, is a possible theory. It is a theory that no man on the face of the earth is wise enough to disprove. It is a theory not only that is tenable, but, in my judgment, a good deal more tenable than any of the others that I have ever tried to examine. Let us look at it for a moment, and see how much it can do. If ever there be an outcome of this scene of life through which we are passing grand enough, good enough, blessed enough, to justify the process through which we are going, then every indictment based on any of the parts of this process falls; and there is no reason why we should hesitate to believe in the loving, omnipotent, all-wise Father, not only in heaven, but on earth.

Let us see. What do we want of a theory? Every man who thinks must have some theory of the universe. He has some thought about it, some scheme, some plan. It is a necessity of an intelligent, thinking being. If he gives it up, why then his theory is that it is such a mass of confusion that he cannot explain it, so even his attempt not to have a

theory is itself practically a theory. What do we ask of a theory? We need no absolute knowledge; neither you nor I need absolute knowledge about the world, about this scheme of life in which we are involved. Precisely what do we need, then? We need a good, practical, working theory,—a theory that shall give us solid ground to stand on in the first place, a theory that shall give us courage enough to face the difficulties of life, a theory that shall nerve our will and strengthen our arm for the daily performance of duty, a theory that shall give us hope, so that we need not be overwhelmed by darkness and despair, a practical working theory of life, a theory that shall give us standing-place and room to exercise all the grandest faculties with which we are endowed,—this is what we need.

Now, if a theory can be found that shall do this, is it not presumably true? What do scientific men ask of any theory? Merely this, that it shall be that theory which accounts for the largest number of facts. Why do we accept the nebular theory of the universe, of our solar system? Not because there are no difficulties connected with it, not because there are not some facts that appear to contradict it, not because it is an easy solution of all the difficulties, but merely because it accounts for nearly all the facts, all the grandest facts; and concerning those things unaccounted for we are at liberty to say that possibly a wider reach of our knowledge would make them also clear. We hold the nebular theory as practically demonstrated, as scientifically true, because it accounts for and explains all the grandest facts of the suns and moons and planets.

Now, if we find a theory of human life that shall account for and provisionally explain all the great facts, are we not scientifically warranted in accepting that theory until a better can be brought, just as scientifically warranted as we are

to accept the nebular theory? If not, I for one fail to see why.

This theory, then, that there is an almighty, an all-wise, an all-loving God, and that he has permitted all the evil and all the tears of the world, and that he has done it for the sake of the outcome, which could be better reached this way than in any other way, seems to me perfectly rational. I know of no way by which it can be disproved; and it accounts, as no other theory with which I am acquainted is able to, for all the great facts of human life. This theory gives room for hope. I know of no other theory that does. And yet hope is one of the mightiest facts of human life. Hope is something that the universe has put in our hearts; and any true theory of life must find room for it or show cause why.

I believe, then, that we are scientifically warranted in holding to this theory in the face of all sorrow and all the trials of life.

But now I wish to help you to see the consistency of this by making a little clearer, if I can, a few of the practical difficulties that confront us, that confuse our thinking, and that burden our hearts. I am inclined to believe that one of the particular things that interfere with our faith in God is an utter misconception as to the sweep and range of omnipotent power. We think that an omnipotent being can do anything. But that is not a correct definition of omnipotence which admits of no limits to the possible results of infinite power. God cannot commit an absurdity. It is a commonplace to say that he cannot make two mountains without a valley between them; that he cannot cover the sea with waves without the depressions that make what we call the troughs. God cannot make a hundred-year-old oak in five minutes. God cannot produce a result without going through *the process* that is necessary for producing the result.

God must either govern this world by what we call general laws, or else he must govern it by a system of perpetual caprice, perpetual interference. An earthquake, for example, is merely one little incident that happens in the process of the cooling and shrinking of the crust of the earth under the guidance of natural laws. A cyclone is only a little incident in the working of the forces that govern the atmospheric circulation of the globe. And so almost all the physical evils of the world are merely incidents in the working of laws which are general and which in their ordinary range and sweep are only grandly beneficent.

Let me state it in this way : The ordinary working of the natural laws, the incidental results of which are earthquakes, cyclones, tempests, and a thousand evils, is productive only of good ; and, if I should attempt to state the ratio of good to the evil, the evil would be so infinitesimal, as compared with the good, as hardly to be worthy of mention. This is scientific fact in relation to the results of the natural forces of the world.

Now this great civilization of ours, spread over the planet, the ordinary working of health and disease, are under general laws. God must govern the world in this way, or else by a system of perpetual interference. What would that mean ? It would mean an abolition of knowledge. It would mean the impossibility of civilization. It would mean that no one of us could lay out any general plan of life. No individual, city, or nation could plan as to what they would do next week or next year. An orderly, growing civilization would be an impossibility in a world governed by perpetual interference called miracle. Suppose men believed that, if they got into trouble, no matter whether they had ever used their brains in trying to keep out of it, a miracle would happen to prevent the result of it : what kind of a world would

it be? This perpetual interference would turn the world into a nursery for undeveloped brains and hearts, or else it would turn it into a mad-house in which nobody would be able to calculate the results of anything. So, when we flipantly and easily bring our indictment against God because something has happened that is a temporary and local evil, or because some friend has died, we assert, by implication, a theory of God's working that is nonsense, that is absurd, that is impossible, and that would result in a thousand times more evil than it would cure.

Let us remember, then, that our physical health and life and the life of those dear to us are in the keeping of these general laws; that God does not "choose," as we say, to take away your little child to punish you. Oh, I get so weary of the childish, undeveloped thought involved in the question, "What have I done, that God takes away my child?" Done? Perhaps nothing but your duty. The question of your moral goodness has no more to do with the life of your child than it has to do with the question whether there will be an earthquake to-morrow in China. Your moral goodness, your life with your child, your life with your neighbor, your faithfulness in every department of life, have nothing to do with the orderly working of God's laws, on which, after all, the prosperity and happiness of the world depend. There are cases, indeed, where it is the result of your fault, your pride,—you have exposed your child, you have not dressed it healthfully, you have been guilty yourself of culpable indulgence; but in that case you have no right to ask why God has done it. But in the great majority of cases, where the person has inherited a weak constitution or been exposed to disease with no fault of his, the working of these general laws must go on for the universal good in spite of the incidental evil. For, as I have said, the evil wrought by a capricious system, by constant interference, would be

unspeakably greater than that which is wrought by the ordinary method by which the world is governed.

Now let us turn to another phase of this question, as to what it is possible for Omnipotence to do. Most of those who bring their indictment thoughtlessly, or of purpose, against any belief in the goodness of God,—most of them think that, if God had chosen, he might have created a world full of people perfectly wise from the beginning, and perfectly good, so that no evil need to have been known among them. But this seems to me as thoughtless, as irrational, as illogical, as it is to suppose that God could create two mountains without a valley to separate them. The creation of a wise, learned man instantaneously, as the result of sheer power, seems to me sheer nonsense. Such a thing is impossible. What do we mean by knowledge? What is the world's knowledge? Is it not the summed up results of the world's experience? and the experience through which the knowledge has been attained was an absolute essential to its attainment. Omnipotence could not possibly help it. Knowledge is the result of experience. How, then, can you have the knowledge without experience? and how can you have a finite being learning things in this world, and not have him make any mistakes? I do not believe, then, that this dream of a world full of wise people created all at once,—one minute blank, the next minute a million wise men,—I do not believe that such a thing is possible. It seems to me an absurdity in the very nature of the case.

Let us apply the same thing to the idea of goodness. What do we mean by moral goodness, moral development, moral growth? Again, do we not mean a certain quality that is the necessary result of experience, through coming in contact with good and evil? I do not believe that it is possible for Omnipotence to create a world full of morally cultured and developed souls all at once. Moral culture and

development mean simply the result of this age-long experience, combating that which you think is wrong and gaining the victory. I do not see how it would be possible for God to create a kind of world of which we sometimes dream; and I am inclined to think that a very strong argument could be made in favor of the theory that this world is the best possible kind of world, provided the outcome of human life here on earth is to be the culture and development of souls. If there is no good in life unless everybody can be rich, if there is no good in life unless everybody can experience the pleasure of foreign travel, if there is no good in life unless everybody can be free from heartache, if there is no good in life unless everybody can have everything that he desires, if there is no good in life except the attainment of the fleeting wish of the moment, why, then, this is a very poor kind of world indeed ; for there is not one in a million of us that has not failed in a thousand ways. But if the outcome of life is the culture and development of a soul, fitting it for a grand career beyond what we call the present, then I can see how this might be the best possible kind of a world for such a process of culture and development. And just this I do believe with all the power of my brain and all the reverence of my soul : I believe that the only thing that can justify this life is the culture and development of a soul. But we know that not he who has not failed in getting rich, not he who has never had a disappointment, not he who has never been ill, not he who has never lost a friend, not he whose eyes have never been wet with tears,— not these are of necessity the successes of life,— though they may be,— but that his life is a success who, when he stands on the border land, stands there a self-controlled, cultivated, developed, noble, aspiring soul, child of the spirit of the Eternal, fitted to go on, step by step, up those stairways of infinity that mean eternal ascent, never to end.

LIFE'S PETTY WORRIES.

It may lie as a question in most of your minds whether "life's petty worries" is a theme of sufficient importance to ask your attention for an hour. In my opinion, just as the innumerable hosts of insects in the world do more to destroy plants, flowers, and fruits than all the storms put together, so it is true that the little worries of life are destructive of more happiness, of more peace, of more practical working force, more destructive of all that high fruitage of life that we ought to seek for, than all of life's calamities put together.

At the outset, we need a definition, we need to fix in our minds what we mean by the petty, useless, preventable worries of life. For I take it that it is human nature, if conscience within or the voice of any outside person who attempts to speak for conscience presents an accusation against any of our faults, for us to attempt to evade the attack by mitigating the fault, by palliating it, by excusing it, by turning it into something else, in our imagination at least, sometimes even trying to dignify it by the name of a virtue. So far as my present acquaintance has gone, I have never known the victim of these petty worries who was willing to admit that there was anything useless about them. They have dignified the worry by some other name ; they have tried to change its character, its nature, to make themselves believe that it was something else, and that under the circumstances it was something not only excusable, but necessary.

There is a story in one of the Arabian Nights concerning a conflict between two supernatural beings, each of whom had the power at will to transform himself into some other creature. He would be first a lion, then, when pursued by his enemy and almost caught in that shape, would suddenly become a bird in the air. Then, when again in danger, he would become a fish in the sea; and so, by changing himself in this Protean fashion from one form to another, he was enabled to escape pursuit. So as we try to ferret out our own faults, or as any one else tries to ferret them out for us, they take a thousand disguises in their attempt to elude pursuit.

Let us then see what is worry in the sense of an anxiety that is inexcusable. I do not by any means intend to find fault with foresight, with a prudent care for the future. Indeed, this is one of the main marks of distinction between the barbarian and the civilized man. The civilized man does take thought, not only for to-day, but for to-morrow, for day after to-morrow, for the next week and the next year. Indeed, it is the mark of a great mind to be able to trace the relation between cause and effect, to foresee consequences and provide against contingencies. The barbarian eats whatever he has to eat, wears whatever he has to wear, uses whatever he possesses, and leaves the future to take care of itself. "The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself," says the proverb. So there is no fault to be found with this prudence that forecasts results, that tries to provide against all possible contingencies and happenings of every kind. It is not only right, it is duty, for a man to lay something by from what he earns. I believe it to be a young man's duty and a young woman's duty, if she or he is a wage-earner, to attempt to lay something by, however small it may be; to begin with the very first earnings, and to think of the day when they

may not be able to earn, of the day when there may be some unusual call ; to lay by something, as the saying is, against a rainy day, to provide for the future, to provide for old age, to provide for children. All this is not only wise and right, but is fundamentally bound up in morals; for no man or woman has the right to run the risk of being some time dependent upon others. All this, then, is granted at the outset.

I might illustrate the same point in a hundred other directions. What would you think of a sea-captain, the master of a great ship, who should start out on a voyage without providing against every conceivable contingency? He must take along every kind of supplies. He must take more coal than he will use on the voyage, for storms and head winds may hinder him from reaching port on the day when he expects to reach it. This prudent foresight for the coming time is not what I mean by worry.

One other thing I would mark as not only permissible, but necessary. In certain crises and contingencies of life there is an overmastering anxiety, an anxiety that is not an evil : it is something that one who considers consequences cannot help. Take the case of a mother watching over a sick child. She has done all she can ; she has provided the best nurse and best physician in her power, and yet she cannot lay aside this care. She is an anxious, watchful providence every hour, day and night.

Or suppose a surgeon dealing with an important case. He has made every provision ; but he knows that the life of his patient hangs on the success of his operation. Can he help a great anxiety? He can help worry, and, if he be fit for his work, he will help it ; but that anxiety which carries the burden and all the consequences until the task is accomplished, this, by as much as he is a man, he cannot escape.

Or take, again, the case of the captain of the great ocean steamer. Can he help having anxiety? If you have ever talked with one who is the noblest among them all, you will find that he comprehends the danger a great deal more than the most worried passenger on the steamer. He understands the difficulties that surround the voyage; he understands the dangers from fire, from machinery giving way here or there in spite of every possible precaution on his part. He understands in the time of fogs that he may run into an iceberg or into some other ship. All these things weigh upon him; and it is because he is tirelessly anxious at his post every moment, or certain that some other competent man is in his place, that the passengers can eat, talk, smoke, write, sing, and amuse themselves at will. They are at peace because every nerve is tense, every faculty strained, every power of his being devoted to the safety of his ship. Anxiety of this sort is not worry.

What do we mean, then, by worry which is preventable, which is mischievous, which we can escape? I mean that fretting, that fussy anxiety, that restlessness, that peace-destroying condition of mind that frets and frets and frets and will not rest nor let any one else rest, after everything has been done. In order to mark more sharply the difference, I shall recur to the other side of one of the illustrations which I have already touched on. Take the case of the mother with the sick child. She ought to exercise all prudent care and foresight, and she does, to prevent the child becoming ill. Then while it is ill, and life is in the balance, she will be anxious necessarily; and that anxiety will lead her to do everything possible for the safety of the child. But suppose beyond that she allows her feelings to get the better of her, becomes restless, becomes fussy, over-anxious, is not at peace, and allows no one else to be, shows her worry in her action, in her face,

in her voice, in her whole manner : then she not only does no good, but becomes a positive source of danger to the very life which is so precious to her, and which is the source of her anxiety.

And I, for one, would not wish to cross the ocean with a sea-captain who was worrying from the moment we started until we were in sight of land on the other side. Worry, fussiness, fret,—these all stand in the way of the efficient discharge of the duty which a provident foresight and a great manly anxiety would lead him to perform. You know plenty of cases of this kind of worry. I do not need to elaborately describe them. You confess it to yourselves in your own lives, and you know and recognize it on the part of your friends and acquaintances, where they themselves are not quite so ready to confess it.

I remember cases in which men in middle life, or perhaps a little beyond it, who had accumulated large fortunes, worried night and day lest in some utterly unforeseen way they should lose their money and die poor. I have known men who, after doing everything they could at their store, their office, during the day, seeing that every possible chance had been provided against, after the hour of closing had passed, and the key had been turned in the lock, and they had gone home, not only refused to rest, but to let any one else rest, worrying lest something unforeseen should happen, lest some man who owed the firm should become insolvent, lest something unforeseen had not been provided against. And yet, as you will readily see, there was nothing to be done about it until the office should be opened the next morning. There was nothing they could possibly do but worry; and of course the worrying would not change by one hair's breadth the course of events that were moving on, under the guidance of inexorable laws, to their necessary results.

I know mothers who spend a great deal of their time worrying about their children. Every time they go out on the street they wonder till they come back again if something is not happening to them, if they have not met with a fall, if they have not been injured by some runaway horse. If they have gone for a sail, while they are enjoying the breeze, while they are watching the dance of the waters and having the grandest time imaginable, the mother imagines them struggling with the waves or lying dead at the bottom. Or, if they go skating, the mother sees nothing but holes in the ice and the children slipping in. Meantime, the boys are having the finest conceivable time. I see mothers worrying as to whether their children are going to develop well, to have ability in this direction or that, whether they are going to make a success of life, what their morals are when the mother is out of sight,—worrying over things that for the time being, at any rate, are beyond their control, and with a worry which does not help in the slightest degree.

I have in mind two types of housekeeper which perhaps I might suggest. I remember one woman in whose house I boarded for a time, years ago when I was living in California, one of the best women I ever knew; but she had allowed herself to get into such a state of perpetual worry over household details that five or six mornings at least out of the week she would appear at the breakfast table, coming from the kitchen where things had not gone quite right, flushed, heated, uncomfortable, half-angry, all her nerves on the outside, miserable as she could be, and bringing an atmosphere of anything but of peace and rest to us. She meant nothing by it. She thought she was doing the best she could; but it was one perpetual scene of worry and fret. I have in mind another woman. There are thousands of both kinds. She kept house so perfectly that one would never

have known from anything she ever said or in any way she looked or anything she did that there was any such thing as housekeeping in the world : it was a mere detail of existence that she would no more have thought of alluding to than she would to the matter of putting on her collar in the morning as the completion of her attire. It was something under foot, something to be done just as one would attend to any other little detail of life. Certainly, that is a grand ideal, is it not? These are some hints as to what I mean by worry,—useless, profitless worry.

Now, what is the harm of it? As I said at the outset, I believe that this utterly useless and preventable worrying on the part of both men and women is the greatest happiness-destroyer on earth. It does more to take away from the happiness of the world than all the sickness, all the death, all the pestilence, all the cyclones, all the earthquakes, all the great calamities of the world. The harm is certainly of sufficient magnitude to make the theme of importance. Not only does it destroy the happiness of the person who allows himself or herself to come into this state of perpetual worriment, but it destroys also the content, the restfulness of others, of friends and all those who come in contact with this person who is so fretted about the smaller things of life. I can enjoy a thunder-storm, I can even enjoy a tempest at sea. These magnificent displays of natural power have something of grandeur about them. But I do not enjoy sleet that pelts and cuts and irritates wherever it touches. I do not enjoy a Scotch mist that simply blots out the landscape and encloses you in a fog. I do not enjoy these petty, mean, uncomfortable displays of the natural forces about me. I can see some excuse for a man or a woman on occasion to become grandly angry for some grand cause. But there is nothing, no excuse, nothing grand, about this perpetual fretting worry that simply

irritates the person himself and all those with whom he comes in contact.

Then, another thing. Negatively ; it does no good. Friction is a necessary part of life. If you are to have a moving train, you must have steam in the engine. You may have all the steam you please, but there must also be friction between the wheel and the rail, so that the one can grip the other. But, beyond that, any useless friction, any lack of proper play on the part of the mechanism, grains of sand in the machine, anything that hinders its free, proper working,—this is friction that destroys power, that hinders advance. This kind of fretting that I have spoken of is this sort of useless friction,—not only useless, but positively injurious. It takes away power. The man who frets and worries over his business wears himself into such a condition of mind that he has not half the capability of meeting an emergency that one has who holds it at arm's length and watches it in all its details, and has reserve force with which to meet the unexpected.

Not only that. I believe this temper of fretting and worrying creates a corresponding temper in those we deal with, and becomes an actual force in the production of just those disasters that we worry about and wish to escape.

I heard, the other day, a saying of General Sherman, in which he compared himself with General Grant, that seemed to me very suggestive in this direction. He was talking intimately with a friend immediately after Grant had taken command of the Army of the Potomac, after his victories in the West. And he said to this friend : Grant is in many ways a most wonderful man. I know more about military history indeed than Grant does ; I know more about the details of military strategy than he does ; I am better trained in all these directions. But Grant never wastes his power.

He does not care anything about what the enemy may be doing that he cannot see. He provides against all contingencies possible; and then he does not worry about something that is beyond his sight and that he can no longer control; while the thought of what the enemy may be doing that I do not know anything about scares me to death all the time. It was this calm, grand power that, after it had done everything it could, held itself waiting for an emergency, and met the shock when it came, that constituted the grandeur of his character.

Then there is another harm that this worrying does. It belittles the soul, belittles manhood and womanhood. Let a person habituate himself to this kind of life for years, and it is written on the face. There is no manhood or womanhood there. Shakspere, in that famous line in one of his sonnets, has laid down the law of human life when he says:

“My nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer’s hand.”

Let a man live all his life engaged in petty things, and he fritters away the grandeur of his own soul, and becomes himself petty. We take the shape and color of our environment. In years of work, years of thought, years of bearing, years of doing, we become what we have been thinking, feeling, bearing, and doing.

Leaving this part of my subject, I must hasten to that which is more important, perhaps, than anything that has gone before: What can be done about it? How shall we get out of this habit and tendency? I have several prescriptions.

In the first place, and most important of all, we must recognize it, confront it, confess it, see what it is. That is the first step. See that it is not prudent foresight, not prudent care; that it is not manly or womanly anxiety; that it

is simply fret and worry. Draw the lines, and set this on one side as something that ought not to be.

Next, learn to use your wills. We have not half waked up to the idea of the power that we possess in that God-like quality of ours that is able to say, "I will" or "I won't." These wills of ours are mightier than we dream. There are men like Napoleon who have the power, as he said he had, to treat his mind as if it were a chest of drawers. If he wished to be engaged in some one department, he pulled out that drawer and devoted himself to it. When he was through, he shut it up, and that was the end of it; and he pulled out another when he chose. Most of us, however, have not developed our wills until we are masters of ourselves and our circumstances. We are the victims of our circumstances, victims of our passions, victims of our dreams, of our whims. We are blown hither and thither by every wind, tossed on every current, lifted on every wave, sunk in every trough.

I am preaching a good deal of the time to myself, this morning; but I have learned one thing,—to control my mental conditions a hundred times more than I used to be able to, simply by the power of will. As a concrete illustration, you know how any anxiety or care seems magnified when you are half asleep. You have done all you can concerning some matter during the day, and you get an early sleep. At two or three o'clock you are awake, and this matter of business comes to haunt you; and it seems ten times as important as it did the night before, and as it will when the sun is up in the morning. How many and many a night have I lain awake by the hour, wondering if—if—if—if! and probably a large part of you have been through the same experience. I have learned at last that I can turn over and go to sleep by sheer will power, and put thought away. I say to myself, I

can do nothing with it until morning, anyhow; and, by putting it away and resting, I am better fitted in the morning to deal with the problem, whatever it may be. Learn, then, that these worries are something that you can put away if you will.

Another thing you can do. You can stop thinking for a little while about yourself and look over the world and see its great need and sorrow, and see the great causes that men and women have for sorrow and tears and heartache, and be ashamed of yourself that you fritter away your efforts over things of such little account. Learn the lesson hinted in a saying that I have quoted before from Wilberforce. When a man came to him, fretting over the question whether Wilberforce's soul was saved,—for you can fret as uselessly over your soul as over anything else,—Wilberforce said, "I had absolutely forgotten that I had a soul." How had he forgotten it? By engaging in noble work for the help of mankind.

Another thing you can do. You can take an inventory of your circumstances and possessions and see how much you would have left provided all that you fear is going to happen should happen; see whether the end of the world would really be at hand. I remember the case of an old clergyman and his wife down in Connecticut. Their house was burned down one night, and the next morning his wife and he were talking over affairs; and she was utterly heart-broken and overwhelmed, and she said, "Everything we had in the world is gone." But he replied: "Yes, everything except a few things. You and I are here; and we are well, and we love each other and are bound up in each other. We have the children, we have the opportunity to go to work again, we have books, we have all the art and literature and history of the world, all that has been achieved, all its great

names and memories ; we have the beautiful world all about us and the sky over our heads ; we have God and we have immortality ; everything is gone but — these ! ”

I take it that the most of us, if we should sit down when we are worrying as to any particular thing that is likely to happen, and say, Let it happen : even if it does, we have so and so left, would find that the cause of the worry and fret was very slight indeed.

But there is another thing more important still that you can do. I have hinted at it partly in what I have already said. You can become engaged in more important work, interested in some great cause, so that you will forget to worry about little and useless things. You know how natural, how simple, that law is. There are many cases on record of soldiers who, in the midst of a battle, have not even noticed that they were struck by a bullet until they had completed the charge, or had captured the fort which they were endeavoring to take ; wounded, perhaps, so that life was in danger, or even it may be fatally, and yet so intent, so earnest, on the more important thing that they did not know it. I have known a man in the heat of a great public oration to become so absorbed in what he was saying that, when he brought his hand down in an important gesture so hard as to break some of the bones, he did not discover it till he was through.

Suppose you are sitting on a hotel piazza at the seaside some summer afternoon. It is pretty warm, and you are very uncomfortable, and you are fretting and worrying about it and saying that it is the hottest day that ever was, and you are fanning and trying to keep cool ; and, just as you are thinking that the most important thing in the world is to get comfortable, the cry comes that a man is drowning. You rush to the rescue ; and you may become so heated that the

question whether you were warm before sinks into insignificance. The perspiration may drop from your brow ; but, by the time you have exerted yourself for an hour, you have forgotten whether the day is hot and whether you are comfortable or not.

Learn, then, that these trifles can be subordinated to higher things ; that you can become interested in something better ; that you can make your life worth something more to your fellow-men, and do it in such a way that the things that you hitherto fretted about shall be utterly forgotten. There are thousands of men who throw themselves away, fritter away their time, for lack of an object in life. Perhaps some of you with good memories may recall that some years ago I used as an illustration a reference to a man who attempted suicide, a wealthy man who had nothing to do. He did not succeed in taking his own life ; and, when some one asked why he did it, he said, "Oh, I got so tired of buttoning and unbuttoning." He had nothing to take up his attention from the details of getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. No wonder that he got tired and tried to commit suicide. Emerson hit at the same thing in his striking saying when discussing the question of immortality. He said there was no reason why we should hope for it unless there was some purpose in it ; that a man would hardly care to have another life "for the sake of wearing out his old boots." Unless a man has some high purpose in life that makes him forget the petty, poor, mean details, he will worry and fret.

As a last and closing thought, and as completing the one already touched upon, let us learn to climb up into the heights, to climb up into the thought of sonship with God, of being a co-worker with him in achieving the grand results towards which this human civilization of ours is tending.

When we get up high enough, even the mountains become level.

Do you remember that little fragment in Tennyson which hints the point so finely, where he pictures an eagle standing on a mountain, looking sheer down some thousands of feet to where the sea is breaking on the beach? If you stood on the beach, it would be all turmoil, and in the time of storm one might speak of waves mountain high. But the eagle stands on the height; and, as Tennyson expresses it, "The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls." He is so high that the waves are nothing. I believe that it is possible for us to climb up into the heights of the soul, to get so into sympathy with the great purposes of God in the education and lifting up of this world that the little, petty, mean things of life that worry and disturb and trouble us shall sink out of sight or become insignificant. When we have taken hold of God's hand in this way, and are sure of him and of ourselves, what does it matter whether we lose a hundred dollars or gain it, whether we are sick to-day or well, whether this project of business succeeds or fails, whether even we die or live? All these details, the incidents of our career, become petty, because we are sons of God, and share his life and his destiny.

THE COMMONPLACE.

THE lives of the great majority of men in all ages have been commonplace. And what is true of the past is true of to-day, and of necessity it will be true in the future. The great mass of us must be content, if content we find anywhere, with leading commonplace, obscure lives, with engaging ourselves in commonplace occupations, in the performance of the commonplace round of daily duties. All men cannot be great: if they were, it would be the abolition of greatness. For what we mean by greatness is that some one overtops his fellows. A person five feet tall would be a giant to a race whose average height was no more than three feet; but, if all men were ten feet tall, no one would be a giant. It is true, then, that the great majority must be practically unknown. If everybody wrote books, who would read them? If everybody led armies, where would be the armies to lead? If everybody were public speakers, where would be the audiences? A business man finds his daily life a very ordinary affair, in the main. Now and then, of course, there are excitements, now and then an opportunity for a brilliant stroke; but ordinarily it is getting up in the morning, going down to the store or office, opening the mail, dealing with ordinary orders from very ordinary people. It is a mere routine of common transactions. The same is true

of any profession. No matter what a man's occupation may be, if he becomes familiar with it, by that very fact it becomes commonplace to him ; so that the minister, the lawyer, the physician, or the judge on his bench, is engaged in what to him is a dull routine, a wearisome, monotonous routine of daily toil. And the mother superintending the house, taking care of the children, seeing that everything is in its place and in order, watching lest the little ones expose themselves to harm, lest their health be endangered, superintending such commonplace matters as clothing and food, looking after their lessons,—this whole round seems a tedious, commonplace thing, one that she can very easily weary of, and one that many a time she will be willing, for a little time at least, to escape.

The danger growing out of this fact is that we shall underestimate the meaning, the significance, of life, because we find it commonplace ; that we shall think it wearisome, of little account ; that we shall lower it in our estimate and not half appreciate its inner meaning, not comprehend its dignity, its possible grandeur ; that we shall say it is not worth while. I see people doing common things badly, who apparently feel as though, if they had some uncommon thing to do, there would be a motive : they would rise to the height of the occasion and prove themselves worthy of its dignity. I hear people every little while saying, My life is of no account : anybody else could do what I am doing quite as well or better than I. If I could write a book, if I were free from this drudgery and had time to unfold and develop that which is in me, I could do some great thing, something worthy of me, something worth being done. So people on every hand excuse themselves for the poor doing of what seem to them poor things. They lower in this way the level of their lives, and they lower and belittle the possibilities of

their own natures, because we are apt to become no higher and no finer than we think, than we imagine, than we dream.

I wish then, if I may, this morning, to help you to appreciate a little better the commonplace, to see what it means, what underlies it, what are the possibilities that constitute it.

I desire to hint a few things concerning the importance of this commonplace world and commonplace life before asking your attention to some suggestions that will follow.

In the first place, note the fact that the most important things in all the world are the commonplace things. The things we can least well do without are the commonplace things. We could spare the marble, if need be. We could spare the jasper, the amethyst. We could comfortably get along without any of the precious stones of the world. But the very base of the earth, the commonplace granite, the foundation on which all things rest, and the commonplace brick, the commonplace materials with which we build our stores and our homes,—these are of incalculably greater importance than all those things that we wear for jewels and ornament.

And so when we come up from the inanimate to the animate world. We go to a museum or menagerie to note some curious structure of animal form, some rarity brought from some far-off clime; but it is the commonplace horse, the commonplace dog, the commonplace fowl, that is important and necessary to our life. And, when we come up to man himself, precisely the same thing is true. If we must do it, we could spare the geniuses better than we can spare the commonplace men of the world. For what does our commercial prosperity rest upon? On the commonplace, every-day honesty of the common, every-day business men. What does our political security rest on? Upon the commonplace intelligence and honesty of the average citizen. Grant used

always to say that the glory of the war was given to the wrong persons. It was not himself and Sherman and Sheridan and Thomas and Meade, the leaders, who really won. They would have been absolutely powerless, had it not been for the strong, loyal sentiment of the people, to start with, which led them to take their places as common soldiers in the ranks, and, when they had taken them, to be faithful even to death to the commonplace duties of the march and the sentry, and the steadiness with which they met the fire of the enemy.

And so in regard to matters of opinion. I do not stand, as you know, with the majority in matters of belief; and yet I freely confess, without fear as to what may be deduced as the logical result from it, that in ordinary matters, nine times out of ten, it is the average opinion of the average man that is right. It is generally safer to walk in the beaten path than it is to seek a new way through the woods. True, indeed, it is that, if there were nothing else in the world except the average, ordinary opinion of the average man, the world would make little progress. But nine times in ten, when a man steps out from the ranks of ordinary people, with some new theory about business, about society, about religion, he is wrong, and the average sense of the common people is right in refusing to follow him. Now and then, of course,—or there never would be any progress,—there comes a time when he who stands and proclaims a new truth and calls the world to follow him is right, speaking for God and the larger humanity; but ordinarily the common sense of the world is to be followed.

Not only, then, is the commonplace the most important thing, but in the commonplace rests the beauty of the world. We sometimes talk as though a few cultured, rich, refined people had a monopoly of all the beautiful things of life.

They have a fine residence, beautiful furniture, and are able to place beautiful pictures on the walls ; and we are therefore apt to narrow down our conception of what it is to possess the world's beauty to an admiration of these things that very few people possess. And yet what is it that makes up the beauty of the world? It is not even the flowers. The most important element of the world's beauty is the common grasses that are trampled down in every field, the common blue overhead, the common green of the waters, the common shimmer of the sunshine. And when you study any of these natural glories of the world, and find out what constitutes it, you find that they are made up of very commonplace materials. Campbell says of the blue of the distant mountains,—

“ ‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue.”

It is only the air that covers them with its blue mantle, this common air. That which constitutes the magnificence of the highest mountain peak is the dust that we trample under foot. And, when you examine the wonder of the sunset, what is it? Commonplace light playing with commonplace mist. If it enveloped you, you would call it fog, and think it very uncomfortable and disagreeable. It is only this commonplace mist transfigured in the glory of the commonplace light that makes the magnificence of that “sunset couch at even.” So the beauty of the world.

Every father, every mother, if he will stop to think, or if she will stop to think, knows that he or she has more beauty in the child's eyes than all the wealth of all the world could buy.

And where is the glory of the world? Where is its romance, its heroism, its honor? Why, we look back sometimes for these. We read the stories of ancient heroism, of

the classic times, of mythology. We read the "Arabian Nights," or we go off with some magician into a romance world that he has created; and here we think we find the wonderful things of the world, while the wonders of the world are close at hand. There has nothing ever been told in fable or in tale of magician that is one-half or one-thousandth part so wonderful, so mysterious, as the processes of nature going on round us that are the commonplace of our every-day life.

Next spring, suppose you think a little. Take the seed of a rose and plant it and watch its growth. What is there in this seed? Nothing: no color, no fragrance, no life, no power of any kind, apparently. It seems the most feeble, helpless, useless thing. But plant it in the commonplace soil, and let the commonplace rain fall, and the commonplace sunshine warm the mould. By and by a little stalk comes up through the soil, then the leaf with its beautiful color, and then at last the unfolding flower. Where do the color, that marvellous tinting, that subtle fragrance come from? How are they evolved from this little, tiny seed, from this commonplace dust and the commonplace rain and sunshine?

We know, indeed,—and this leads us across the threshold of another wonder that the world has never fathomed,—that the rose has no fragrance, no color. We know that the color, the fragrance, all the beauty we talk of, are simply in the brain. They are only movements, motions, that have been translated by this mysterious mind of ours,—how, why, nobody knows. Here is a wonder that dwarfs all the fable and all the miracle of all the world.

Then the wonder of human love. Did anybody ever fathom it? Keats says most beautifully,—

"Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever."

But what is it? How is it that a man or a woman walks through the world in the midst of the commonplace multitude, and is as indifferent to them all as though he were walking among the trees of the forest, and at last some day the rustle of a dress, the glance of an eye, the touch of a finger, and a life's fate hangs on a word? In the presence of this love, work becomes easy, burdens become light, all darkness is shot through with sunshine, and the world is transformed and filled with glory. Who ever explained it? Yet it is perfectly commonplace.

Then let me hint a similar truth concerning religion. The important thing about religion,—what is it? What is the best thing that any religion on earth ever did or ever can do? Its finest flower is a gentle, true, loving, helpful man or woman. The great thing about a religion is not fables that encircle its birth, not the cycle of myth and mystery that girdles its founder, not the story of children unnaturally born. We talk of the "Madonna and the Child." Every father has seen the Madonna and the Child in his own home, and a more wonderful Madonna than any that ancient story tells us about. The wonderful thing about religion is not its ritual, its magnificent ceremonial, its grand cathedrals. All these are nothing and worse than nothing, except as they create the perfectly commonplace things,—love, duty, tenderness, gentleness, and human help. These commonplace things are the most important things in all the religion of the world.

Then, when we look to our sources of happiness, is not the same thing true? I suppose that most men and women spend about half their lives before they learn this, and a great many of them seem never to learn it at all. You will find some man climbing the ladder of fame, of power, of wealth, who has reached almost the top. He is powerful,

rich, mighty, the envy of those beneath him ; but he himself is miserable, discontented, worried, unhappy. Why ? Perhaps purely from envy of some one who occupies one round above him ; while, beneath him, at the very bottom of the ladder, are thousands of people contented and happy. I have known rich people, and I have known poor people ; and it is my opinion that the largest number of happy people that I have ever seen are among neither the very rich nor the very poor. They are found among our commonplace people who have enough to live comfortably, quietly, simply, and who have sense enough to be happy with what they have rather than be willing to throw away everything because they do not possess something else. Every man who stops and thinks for five minutes knows that the elements of human happiness are not in the extraordinary things, not in those things accessible only to the few. It would take only a glimpse behind the curtain to undeceive any who are unwise enough to suppose that all the rich and all the prosperous are therefore happy.

What are the elements of happiness ? Health. I shall never forget how, some years ago, as I met a lady walking on the street,—a lady whose life was one of hard labor, as she was at the head of a great school,—she said to me, “Mr. Savage, it is perfect ecstasy to me just to breathe !” She was so well that the very air was a delight, and the sun beauty. The whole world played on an instrument perfectly in tune. What could the result be but music ? Health, then, is one element of happiness.

A friend. Who has a friend ? Any one who is worthy of one may have one,—a friend, a sense of companionship, some one to sympathize with your feelings, your purposes, your ideas, your views of life, the opportunity for exchange of sympathy and sentiment.

A book. The ability to read, to hold converse with the great of all ages; an eye trained to see things, to note the significance, the beauty, the meaning of the world; an ear, to listen, to detect the distinction between discord and music,—these are commonplace things; but they are the elements of human happiness. There is no one thing needful for happiness that is not accessible to-day to any healthful, earnest, faithful soul.

And heaven, if we ever attain it,—oh! we waste so much of what might be heaven here dreaming about one somewhere else,—heaven, when we get it, what will constitute its happiness? Not the sea of glass, the golden streets and jewelled gates,—none of these things. It will be only human companionship, human love, sympathy, earnest labor for some earnest end. You cannot frame human happiness out of any other materials than these. It is not the place, not the surroundings: it is the being that determines whether we are happy or miserable.

Such, then, being the case, I wish to suggest two or three things, by way of inference or lesson, that ought at any rate to follow from this.

First, I wish you to note that the wonder of the world, its art, its beauty, its music, its poetry, all the wonderful things of which we dream, are just beneath the surface of our commonplace lives. Where are the dramas, the epics, the oratorios, the operas, the poems, the songs? They are all round us. There were thousands of people who lived in Homer's time who did not see an epic, but he did. There were thousands surrounding Beethoven who heard no music, but he heard it. There were thousands in the time of Shakspere who saw no dramas, and yet life was one drama to him. These things are right about us all the time. It only needs eyes to see, ears to hear, fingers to execute, and patience

to wait, when out of the commonplace is wrought a statue, is breathed a poem, is sung a song, is recited a drama. These things are all here.

Another thing ought to be a comfort to all of us. It is infinite comfort to me. I know that the same quality as that which is manifested in the heroic, in the music, in the art, in the drama of the world, the same quality inheres in and is a part of every commonplace man and woman. If there were not something of Beethoven in my nature, Beethoven could not speak to me, and I could not respond. If there were not something of Shakspere in me, he would have no voice for my soul. If there were not something of Raphael in me, I could see nothing in Raphael. And what is true of me is true of every man and woman on the face of the earth who can be touched or thrilled or lifted up by sculpture, by painting, by art of any kind. These things are in you all. They are a part of your nature. You are of the same kind as Michel Angelo and Dante and Goethe and Gautama and Jesus, or else they could not have sprung out of common human nature and have any word that common human nature could comprehend.

Then there is another thing I wish you to note,—the fact that heroism, greatness, genius of any kind, is nothing more nor less than the commonplace lifted to a higher pitch. What is the sublimity of the mountain? Only the common earth heaved thousands of feet into the air. What is the sublimity of a wave in a storm? It is the same kind of water that you may gather as you walk the beach and hold in your hand, flashing up into the sunshine or brightening out into this whiteness against the blackness of the storm. What is the heroism of the world? It is only quiet, faithful performance of duty when called upon to manifest itself on some occasion that calls for great sacrifice,—the same quiet

duty placed in a new set of circumstances, manifesting itself in another way, precisely as it is the common electricity that runs on our daily errands that on certain occasions flashes out in the brilliancy of the lightning that sets the sky aflame. And this commonplace heroism that is faithful in obscure ways is much more wonderful than that which ordinarily goes by the name of heroism. It was no very wonderful thing, I think, for Sheridan, being Sheridan, when he found the army in flight, to mount his horse and ride to Winchester twenty miles away, riding into song, riding into eternal fame, as he knew he was if he succeeded, a nation looking on, the world ready to clap hands and shout its pæan of victory. It seems to me that it was a much easier thing than for one of those frightened, commonplace foot-soldiers whom he met in retreat to turn about and march into the face of death, to march into no song, into no glory, but only into the obscurity of the smoke of battle and down into a grave without even a name, perhaps, telling who slept there. I think that was the grander heroism. So the heroism of common life which is faithful to common duties is above that which is recited in books and chanted in pæans of triumph.

This suggests another point. We are apt to delude ourselves with the idea that this commonplace life of ours is not fruitful in opportunities. We say: If we only had a chance. The days are so short. They are filled and frittered away with such tiny cares. But what is a day? Emerson says somewhere, "To-day is a king in disguise." Somebody has said that a hero is never a hero to his valet. It takes a hero to recognize a hero. It takes a king to look level into the eyes of a king and know him for what he is. If your days are beggars, and not kings, it is because the rags are about you instead of being about the day. Note

the meaning of that grand sentence which closes Lowell's great poem on Columbus :—

“One poor day!
Remember whose, and not how short it is!
It is God's day, it is Columbus's.
A lavish day! One day, with life and heart,
Is more than time enough to find a world!”

As for opportunity, I must recite to you a poem by a man who died too soon, Edward Rowland Sill,—a poem entitled “Opportunity” :—

“This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.

“A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, ‘Had I a sword of keener steel,—
That blue blade that the King's son bears,— but this
Blunt thing!’— he snapped and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.

“Then came the King's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.”

There are opportunities enough. The people who echo Hamlet's phrase,—

“The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!”—

are probably like Hamlet. Hamlet was not born to set any time right. No Hamlet-like man ever yet helped the world,

though it were out of joint. It needs a man with will, resolution, capable of action, to help the time. Hamlet had a hundred opportunities, but he spent them in speculating instead of acting. He spent them in talking about what a poor miserable affair this human life is. We follow Hamlet's example. The time may be out of joint: let us be in tune with the great purposes of the world, and there shall be opportunities enough found for heroism.

Then let us remember at the last that it is just this drudgery of life, just the attrition of these ceaseless, commonplace duties, that are to shape our souls, if we will, into the likeness of the divine. It was commonplace work for Michel Angelo to hew out his Moses and his David from the block of marble. It was tedious, tiresome work, chipping little by little,—stone mason's work, so far as the drudgery side of it was concerned. But the supreme artist did not escape drudgery and commonplace toil. He was one of the most tireless and hard workers of the world. The only difference between him and us was that he dreamed a beauty hidden in the stone which should be seen as the result of his tireless drudgery and toil, and he sought to find it.

There is a hidden glory, beauty, sublimity, in our commonplace life that shall yet be realized. We have not the artistic genius yet to see it; but it will change the meaning and purpose of our life, and make that grand which we think only commonplace.

HELPING.

"LET every man look out for number one, and the whole world will be looked out for," is a very popular saying. A little thought, however, will reveal the fact that it is the quintessence and very motto of selfishness. And yet at first sight, until we look a little beneath the surface to discover the working of the principle, it seems to be the utterance of one of the central ideas of that philosophy of the universe which has been generally accepted by the most competent thinkers at the present time. You know that Darwin teaches us that we are in the midst—not only we men and women, but all things that are—of a struggle for life, and that it is the fittest that survives. Note a misconception here. Darwinism does not teach the survival of the fittest, morally or spiritually, of necessity. That is not the meaning of the word "fittest" as it is used. It simply teaches that the winner in this great struggle for life is of necessity the one best fitted to control the conditions, best fitted to win, in short, in that particular battle. And the world does seem to be under the dominion of this law. As you go out into your yards in the early spring, the battle is all around you. You may feel the beauty of the scene, thinking of the blue sky overhead, the soft sunshine, the new warmth in the air; but the grass-blades at your feet are engaged, though not conscious of it, in a fierce struggle for life. That particular blade of grass which happens to have the best soil, which

is the best watered, which is played upon by the life-giving air to the largest extent, which has plenty of sunshine,—that particular blade wins in the battle of life. Those that lack these favoring conditions die out, or at least attain only a stunted or abortive growth. In the struggle for life on the lower plane of the inanimate, there is of course no pity, no sympathy, no helpfulness. The trees in the forest reach up to the sunlight, spread out their branches widely to the air, and the one that has the freest room and the best conditions becomes the mightiest of the trees. But there is no sympathy between tree and tree. No tree ever helps another tree, or pities its failure or foregoes a little of its own advantage for the sake of one less favorably circumstanced.

When we come up into the animal world, the same principle is perpetually and pitilessly at work. Here, indeed, as among the grasses and trees and all forms of unconscious life, the law works only for the production of the best conceivable results. The finest wings, the swiftest runners, the grandest development of muscular power, the acutest cunning, these things that make the different animals and birds strong, fleet, beautiful, are simply the results of this incessant, pitiless battle for life; and no one animal thinks of stopping to help or pity another. We do, indeed, find traces of sympathy as we come up to those animals that are nearest to man. Undoubtedly, we find here the germs of those ethical ideas which have come at last to be the dominant force of human life. When we reach the human race, when we come to deal with man in the old days of barbarism of the lowest type, we find substantially this same natural law—the battle for life and the survival of the fittest—at work in all its rigor. After a little, there comes in a change. There begins to show itself the working of another law mightier than this called natural selection. It is natural indeed, but we give it

a name to indicate the different and higher method of its working. We call it "human selection." Human love, human feeling, human sympathy, human tenderness, human pity,—these begin in a half-crude and rudimentary way to manifest themselves and to modify the law as it works among the unconscious forces of the world. A man, for example, loves a woman with a half-barbaric affection, perhaps. He chooses her for a wife. He no longer fights simply for his own individuality, but he thinks of her as now a part of himself. He thinks of her perhaps as the dearest part of himself, and the power of sympathy and love makes him fight no longer simply for his own personal existence, for food, for shelter, for clothing, for adornment, for luxuries of one kind and another for himself; but he fights for her and she for him, so that the selfishness begins to open out into the rudimentary blossom of that which is unselfish. A child is born; and there is now a group of three, then four, five, six, whatever the number may be,—the group called the family,—a family bound by ties of love and sympathy, so that the man thinks of all these as only parts of himself, to be thought of, to be cared for as much as himself, and, if he be noble, to be thought of even more than himself. Here is the birth of the principle of sympathy and helpfulness extended beyond the limits of the individual life.

The family enlarges and grows until we have a patriarchal tribe which may widen out until it numbers hundreds and thousands. There may be only a feeling of antagonism towards any other family or tribe, but within the limits of this there is a certain degree of mutual sympathy and helpfulness.

By and by, a new step is taken. It was taken in ancient Athens. I do not remember now the year or the name of the ruler under whom it occurred, but the change was made

there from the tribal organization to the territorial one. Not all the people that were supposed to be bound together by ties of kinship, by ties of blood merely, but all those within certain definite territorial limits, were looked upon as one people ; and it was this one people against the world. Other peoples were supposed to be antagonists or rivals. As these bodies of people enlarged, as the bounds of sympathy widened, there came at last into the thought and heart of the noblest men a dream of humanity, until the old Roman writer could express himself by saying, “ I am a man, and nothing which is human is foreign to my sympathy.” Then came the dream of what Tennyson has called

“ The Parliament of man, the Federation of the world,”

which is a dream yet ; for neither politically, socially, industrially, nor religiously, have we risen to the practical carrying out of these grandly human ideas. We have risen at the most no higher than patriotism. It is our country still against the world,—only the larger family. If an American is injured somewhere in Central Africa, we feel ourselves bound to call the tribes that injured him to account. If a Frenchman be injured there, we leave it for France : it is none of our concern. We take care of Americans : we do not yet feel bound to take care of men.

In the matter of helpfulness there are various forms of exercising it. There are still a large number of people who question whether we ought not to revert to the older and lower working of the law of natural selection ; and, at first sight, it seems promising. It would be cruel surgery ; but we have learned that surgery is sometimes needed, and that the results are an accretion of human happiness. Suppose, for example, that we should do as some of the ancient

nations that we call civilized did. Suppose we should expose or leave to perish malformed or weak-minded children. Suppose we should let the weakest go to the wall. Suppose we should let the crippled and maimed, the feeble-minded and incompetent, be trodden down under foot and so blotted out. It would be a quick and effectual way of disposing of vice, of crime, of weakness of every kind. Suppose we let the strong and the fair and the successful win, and let the perishing classes perish, and the quicker, the better. It would seem at first like the creation of a finer, higher type of manhood. We apply that method of cultivation to our gardens, fields, and parks. We weed out and destroy those growths that are not healthful, not beautiful, not successful, in the strife for life; and the result is a fairer and better growth, a finer garden, a finer park, more beautiful fields, better agricultural results. Suppose we should try it in our dealing with humanity. The result would be clear heads, strong brains, brawny arms, muscular and healthy bodies. It would be undoubtedly the finest type of human animal that the world has ever seen. But what else? We have learned to know that these qualities which are of the highest degree, that are peculiar to humanity, are just the ones that would have to be destroyed in the process. We should be grand animals, but animals only. We should have fine brains, fine muscles; but the heart, the feelings, tenderness, sympathy, love, all the finer, sweeter intuitions and aspirations, would have been extinguished. So that, in order to let this law of natural selection have free play on the human plane, we should have to pursue a course of human suicide. Animals would live again, and man would die. There would be no more humanity, in the higher sense of the word, on the face of the earth.

Note, then, this fact. We have arrived at this stage in

our morning's discussion. We are so bound together, so linked in with our fellow-men, that we are one as a race; that we cannot shake off the obligations of being helpful towards our fellows without abdicating our souls, without ceasing to be sons and daughters of God. Mr. Hale has a saying—I cannot quote it word for word, but only the idea—that is apt and wise, as many of his sayings are found to be. He says that the words that begin with *con*,—converse, etc.,—meaning *with*, imply sympathy and coworking, and are divine words; and that the words that begin with *dis*, implying separation, division, disunion,—these words are infernal words. Whether we find it to be true in regard to all words spelled with *con* and *dis* in the dictionary or not, the heart of the thought is true. To be men and women, then, in the highest and truest sense of the word, we must be helpers of our fellow-men,—helpers of the weak, the crippled, the vicious, the incompetent, and helpers the more patiently by as much as the need is deep-seated and hard to be removed.

Let us turn, then, to another phase of our subject, and see something of what it is to help our fellows. How, in what departments of life, do they need help?

Here let us never forget that we help men most, and help them most permanently, when we help them in the higher ranges of their being instead of the lower. We should help, indeed, in the lower none the less for this consideration, because these lower needs are immediate. They press upon us. They call for aid. We cannot stand in the presence of pain, and not wish to alleviate it; in the presence of hunger, and not wish to give food; in the presence of nakedness, without desiring to clothe it; in the presence of any physical evil or sorrow, without our hearts, if they be humane, leaping with the purpose to alleviate. But these lower needs, if we look at them rightly, profoundly, are only symp-

toms. We must, indeed, doctor the symptoms ; but the highest help is the removal of the causes. Feed the hungry, clothe the needy, alleviate the suffering that is on every hand, and do this over and over again ; but it is not cure. In very few cases is the real need of the soul cured on the lower plane.

But suppose we go up towards the higher. Suppose we recognize the fact that the best help is in the direction of self-controlled manhood and womanhood, educated brain and hand. This work, of course, calls for our help, especially in the department of childhood ; for we can educate very little, and only superficially, those who are older. And the great help that we ought to render towards those who need is this help in the higher ranges. Help people to think correctly, to feel nobly, to be masters of themselves and of their surroundings,— that kind of mastery that comes from a true education, such an education as is the unfolding and development of all the native powers and faculties of being. When we have done this, do you not see that we have gone straight to the fountain-head of the evil, and that, in curing in a higher range, we work not a temporary aid, but a permanent cure ? Every philosophical thinker and student of the history of human progress will bear out the statement as true that nearly all the poverty, nearly all the vice, nearly all the crime, nearly all the suffering, nearly all the need of the world, have their source not primarily in physical evils, physical wants, physical sorrows, but in thought, in character. It is the lack of moral fibre, it is the lack of self-control, the lack of foresight, the lack of developed brain power to control and shape conditions, in which the evil of the world has its source. And, if we can help people in these higher ranges of life,— help them to be men and to be women,— we make them capable of feeding, clothing,

and sheltering themselves, and doing this not by the week or month, but by the year and through life.

If we can carry the work higher still, if we can bring the people to feel that they are, indeed, the children of God, intended to be developed into his likeness, if we can make them feel that they are souls, that they have a grander destiny than that which can be regarded as success or failure in the outer affairs of this life, then we make them supreme masters over their destiny; we make them capable of bearing failure, if that must come; we make them capable of wisely wielding success, if it can be attained.

And here note how grandly comes in that saying of Jesus. How wise was the philosophy of it as well as profound its spiritual significance; how direct, too, in its suggestion, though we do not as yet half measure its meaning! He said, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these lower things,—care of the body, what to eat, what to wear, what our shelter shall be,—all these things shall be added. In other words, if people are right in the higher realm, then these lower things shall take care of themselves. But you cannot permanently help people concerning these lower things by concentrating all your help upon them.

Now turn to our third and last division. I wish to consider a few of the difficulties that face us as we try to make ourselves helpers to our fellows.

Consider it first on this lower plane of helping the physical needs of the world. It is undoubtedly true that in the past in many parts of Europe, under the teaching of the popular Christianity of the time, indiscriminate charity has been considered one of the highest and greatest virtues. It has been argued gravely by some that it would not be a good thing to have all the evils of the world cured, because

in that case it would take away the opportunity for just this spiritual culture on the part of the helpers. It is true that this matter has been carried to an excess that has resulted in grave evils. Pauperism has been cultivated. Indiscriminate charity always cultivates pauperism ; and people have waked up now and then to find that, instead of really curing the wants, really alleviating the needs of the world, they have been adding to them by the indiscriminate, thoughtless way in which they have been giving. One of the noblest women of this country—a woman of immense wealth, and who through a series of years gave away money by the thousands—stopped at last to consider the results of what she had been doing, and published her confession, saying that she had become convinced that she had done more harm in the way in which she had been giving than she had done good. I do not undertake to pass upon her judgment as to whether it was true or not ; but it undoubtedly is true in many cases that pauperism has been sheltered and nursed instead of diminished by large numbers of people who have looked over the world and wondered how they should help.

A business man driven with his work, all the time absorbed in it, says, I have no time to look up this case of need. I have no time to investigate whether they are worthy. And I have known men who have left a regular order with their book-keepers to give about so much to every applicant as the easiest way to be done with it. I say that this has become a difficulty, that a great many men are asking where they shall put their money, or how they shall feel sure that they are really helping the world. Sometimes they become discouraged ; and, feeling the difficulties to be so great, they "shut down," as they say, and refuse to give altogether. But this will never do. Because the principle of giving has been abused in the past, that cannot release us from the necessity

of helping those who are struggling, who have fallen behind, who have become stragglers in the grand army of humanity on the march. Because it is difficult to help, we are not thereby released from duty. Indeed, I fancy it might be better for us if we were willing to devote a little less time to the accumulation and a little more, if we have not enough, to finding out what are the real cases of need and how they may be alleviated. It is good work to create a reservoir; but it is a grander thing to use the water accumulated in the reservoir for the fertilization of the fields of the world. Better have a little less in the reservoir, and have what is there used, than simply to accumulate, having no end in view except stagnation or the bursting of the barriers at last to the devastating of society, or some tremendous social upheaval under the impulse of the sense of injustice. We must help, we must take time to help, we must find out how to help, if we would be humane; but, until we can help in the higher ranges of life, we must find out how to alleviate day by day. We cannot let some poor woman starve in the garret, with her white and pinched face, and her starving baby at her breast, while we seek out the far-off cause of suffering, and work changes that will make the world happy in a thousand years. We must help as we go, not forgetting as we go on the higher and more far-reaching work which shall bring about the permanent results.

And, when we come to this matter of helping in the intellectual range, we find perhaps still greater difficulties. The man who sets himself up to teach others of course assumes that they are wrong, and that he is right; and people resent that attitude. You begin to argue with a man in regard to his political opinions, his social ideas, or his religious beliefs, and the chances are that ninety-nine times out of a hundred you put him at once in a position of antagonism. He resents

it that you assume that you are right, and that you are competent to teach him something better than he knows already. There is, then, this feeling of antagonism, even when it is not expressed.

Then one of the grave evils of the world, as I think, is that people so misuse and misapply the idea of loyalty. I know people, for example, who are ready bitterly to fling sharp and hard words at a man — for what? Because he has changed his political ideas. They say he has become a traitor to his party, be he Democratic, Republican, or what not. Traitor to his party! When did a man, when he was worthy to be called a man, pledge himself to eternal allegiance to any party? There is only one thing that a man can afford to pledge changeless allegiance to, and that is truth. And if one of your fellow-men makes up his mind that on any political or social problem or religious idea he has been mistaken, and changes his opinions out of regard for what he is convinced is true, no matter whether you agree with him or not, pay him the honor of believing him to be an honest man, and of being willing to appear inconsistent, if need be, for the sake of this higher loyalty.

Then there is another difficulty in the way of helping people out of false ideas, and this particularly in the realm of religious thought. I know how I was trained in the theological seminary. I do not know that a word was ever spoken to me about untrammeled search for truth and simply defending that. I spent three years in being told that a certain set of ideas constituted the truth, and that I was to fight for that against all comers. This is the way people are trained in religion. They are taught that the ideas that their fathers and their teachers held are God's truth, and that they are to fight for and defend those ideas. And the boy who changes his opinions stands the chance of

being spoken of as dishonoring his father because he wants to learn something that his father did not know.

There is another thought closely linked with this. People have been taught by the year that it was wrong, wicked, a sin against God, to doubt in matters of religion, to change their ideas. So it is against all these obstacles that we work when we try to help people in the higher ranges of their thought.

And there is a higher range still than those I have indicated; and that is the realm of the spirit, the realm of character, of thought, feeling, of the ideal. How can we help there? Here it is perhaps even more difficult than anywhere else. And we become most easily discouraged here, because there is no way by which we can find out how much we have done or whether we have done anything. If you give a hungry man food, there is some definite measurement of what you have accomplished. If you give a naked person clothing, you can see what you have done. If you teach a person a lesson, and he accepts it as true, you can measure that. But, if you make a man nobler, finer, sweeter, higher in his aspirations, nobler in his impulses and the motives of his life, how are you to measure that? How are you to be sure that you have accomplished it? You cannot measure it by the square yard, you cannot weigh it by the pound, you cannot see it, you cannot feel it. Yet this is the most important of all. How do we help here? Again, not in the ways that are efficient on the lower plane; for help in the spiritual range is almost entirely by being. We help by what we are. For, in the long run, no man and no woman can conceal character. It tells, it influences. We carry an atmosphere that impinges upon the spiritual atmosphere of all those with whom we come in contact. We repel, we know not how. We attract, we know not how. We depress, we know

not how. We lift, we know not how. The only safety is in being every day noble, true, fine, sweet, grand in character. And let us remember in this higher range of life we cannot go through the world without influence. We do hurt or we do help every day of our lives. Science has taught us at last that if the shadow of a leaf is cast by the sun against the surface of a stone wall it leaves its impress, and the wall is never again what it was before. And we cast our shadow across the pathway of hundreds and thousands; and consciously or unconsciously, merely by what we are, we change the course, depress, or lift the level of human lives. Take this for a warning, and ever be on your guard. Take it for comfort, and do not be easily discouraged.

Our unconscious influence is beautifully expressed in the following lines by Emerson in his poem "Each and All":—

"Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent."

One more illustration I wish to give you in closing, carrying its own and an added lesson. I came across, the other day, in a little paper published in Chicago, an article written by a woman whose name is well known in some parts of the country, at least. At the beginning of the article, she quotes a poem written by a man who was an officer in the army, Colonel Richard Realf,—a poem I cannot quote, but mighty in its sweep and inspiring in its reach. This lady says it

was fifteen years ago that she first read this poem, and that it changed her whole life. She said it was a conversion : it was almost like the birth of her soul to a new world that had opened to her. A little while ago,—she had never seen and never written a word to this man,—she learned that he had committed suicide, broken-hearted and discouraged. Among his effects was found another poem, written the day before his death, the first verse of which I will read to you :—

“ When
For me the end has come, and I am dead,
And little, voluble, chattering daws of men
Peck at me curiously, let it then be said,
By some one brave enough to speak the truth,
‘Here lies a great soul killed by cruel wrong.’
Down all the balmy days of his fresh youth
To his bleak, desolate noon, with sword and song
And speech that rushed up hotly from the heart,
He wrought for liberty, till his own wound
(He had been stabbed), concealed with painful art
Through wasting years, mastered him, and he swooned,
And sank there, where you see him lying now,
With that word ‘Failure’ written on his brow.”

The lady goes on to say that “here was a life one of whose grand songs had revolutionized my own, who dies having written as his epitaph the word ‘failure’; and who knows how many more lives he had inspired without knowing it?” And she raises the question, “Perhaps, if I had written him what he had done for me, it might have given him courage to bear the struggle and live on yet for the world that he had so helped.” And then she closes with this other little verse, the authorship of which I do not know :—

"For hearts, dear love, such seedlings are
That need so little,— ah, so less
Than little on this earth,— to bear
The sun-sweet blossom, happiness;
And sing — those dying hearts that come
To go — their swan song, flying home,—
A touch, a tender tone, no more,
A face that lingers at the door
To turn and smile, a fond word said,
A kiss,— these things make heaven; and yet
We do neglect, refuse, forget
To give that little ere 'tis fled,—
 Ah me! ah me! —
And sad hearts go uncomforted."

Let us remember, then, however weak we are, however poor or commonplace our lives, however obscure, that by just being something grand we, of necessity, do help somebody; that our lives are a part of that great song that shall usher in the triumph of the world. And, if people do help you, since there is no sure way of their finding it out, tell them so, and give them courage and strength that they may bear up and go on helping still to the end.

CONFLICTS OF CONSCIENCE.

I SUPPOSE there is hardly a conceivable action, belief, or course of conduct that has not sometime and somewhere in the history of the world been conscientiously approved and as conscientiously condemned. People have conscientiously upheld and attempted to spread a certain system of religion ; others have as conscientiously opposed it and attempted its overthrow. People have conscientiously supported certain forms of government ; others have as conscientiously labored to undermine those forms. Fathers and mothers have conscientiously cared for, tended, and trained their little children ; other fathers and mothers have as conscientiously put them to death. Children have conscientiously watched over and endeavored to comfort the declining years of their aged parents ; other children have as conscientiously felt bound to take away their lives when they had reached a certain age, to prevent them from becoming helpless and dependent. So there is hardly a deed commonly looked on to-day as a crime, which men somewhere else have not regarded as a virtue, possibly even as part of a divinely-given system of religious service and worship.

We find then, as we look over the world, this contradiction of consciences,— not only the contradiction of one age by its successor, but the contradiction of different classes and races belonging to the same age. And yet, when I was a child,—

and I presume the same is true of most of you,—I was taught to regard my conscience as a sort of special faculty, partly, if not wholly, divine, which had been given me for the express purpose of guiding my steps and telling me what was right and what was wrong. My mother, from whom I suppose I imbibed these ideas, believed at that time most conscientiously in eternal punishment, though she has long since outgrown that belief. But it troubled me even then, and it was a problem too hard for me to solve, to note the fact that her most intimate personal friend as conscientiously disbelieved this doctrine. And yet, in this particular case, these apparently clashing facts did not interfere with the most loving and tender friendship. It has been taught, I think, as one of the commonest ideas of religion in the past that conscience was the voice of God in the soul, that it always spoke with at least a semi-divine authority, and that, whatever the consequence, it was not to be disregarded.

And yet even those who have taught this doctrine have been compelled by the facts to recognize these apparent inconsistencies, these conflicts and contradictions; and what has been the result on the part of those who have thought about it? It is a common teaching on the part of the Orthodox Church to tell us that this broken and inconsistent condition of conscience has been brought about by the fall of man, which was supposed to have disturbed and injured so many of our human faculties. Conscience, which would have been an eternal and safe guide, became, after that, only a broken light. It became like the compass needle deflected from the true north by the attraction of outside and disturbing forces of one kind or another.

On the part of others,—and this I take it is the commoner state of mind and the one, perhaps, in some points the most to be regretted,—on the part of others, this apparent con-

fusion and contradiction have produced this effect: they have come to question whether there be any eternal, unchanging right, whether there be any divine authority of conscience left. I have been told by people, by personal friends, without perhaps meaning to express a settled conviction, but as a query, that they were half inclined to think that right and wrong were largely matters of convention. That which is thought to be right in Turkey is wrong in Massachusetts; that which in Central Africa does not disturb the conscience of anybody is simply shocking and unbearable to a higher type of civilization. People are disturbed, then, over the question whether their ideas of right and wrong, that which they call conscience, be not, after all, matters of convention and inheritance, of habit, of training, of special teaching, the result of governmental interference, of social ideas and customs.

It seems to me well, then, for us to see if we can run a line of light through this darkness; to see if we can find a clew that shall lead us out of the apparent labyrinth into clear daylight. I do not think it will be very difficult to find.

If we study a little carefully the origin and the growth of conscience and the ideas of right and wrong, we shall be able to note that there is an element in it that is permanent, changeless, as eternal as God, and that there is also this element of variability and change. What that means, however, is simply this: the principle does not change, has never changed from the rudest beginnings of civilization until now; and it cannot possibly be conceived of as changing. The principle abides. It is only the application, the question as to the particular case, that disturbs and unsettles.

Let us, then, note for a little—so much as is necessary for our present purpose—the origin and the growth of conscience, that we may find out what is permanent and what is changeable in it.

If you could conceive of a man as living alone on some island in the ocean, as never, his whole life long, coming into any sort of personal relation with anybody else, you would see at once that nearly all moral questions for him would be in abeyance. Most of those things that we speak of as right and wrong would be non-existent to him. He could not commit any crime, and he could be guilty of very few vices. He could not harm anybody, because he could not help anybody. He might indeed lower the type and character of his own personal life which he had inherited as the result of civilization. He might degrade his own nature, he might falsify the spiritual relation which ought to exist between his soul and his God; but he could do no harm to any other man, woman, or child on earth.

This hints at the fact which is at the root of all our discussion, that conscience is born of the fact of society. *Con, scio,* to know with, to be conscious of the relations in which you stand to somebody else: this is the source and this hints the meaning of conscience. It ought not to seem strange to us—indeed, it ought to bind us only the more tenderly to the lower forms of life beneath us, because it hints the fact that life from first to last, from lowest to highest, is all one—to know that we can trace the beginnings of certain moral ideas and actions even among the lower animals, among dogs and horses and birds, among those who live in groups, so that they can help or hurt each other, so that they can communicate with each other, so that they can feel for each other. Here you find some rudimentary appearances of what we call morality among men. But human morality is born when two people look each other in the face and recognize the fact that here are two independent personalities. When I am able to put myself in the place of another by the power of imaginative sympathy, when I am able to say,

There is a person who can be hurt as I can be hurt, who can be helped as I can be helped, who can feel joy and can feel pain as I feel joy and pain, and who has the same right naturally to the good of life that I have, then conscience is born. In this fact of society, then, of personal relationship, the consciousness of the relationship of one person to another, our human conscience is born.

But you will note that of necessity the reach of this conscience is limited by the range of the imaginative sympathy. This little conscience, this family conscience,—a conscience that extends to the few about you and that you think of as specially a part of your own life,—broadens until it is a tribal conscience; and men and women recognize the rights and duties within the limits of the tribe, but have no feeling, no imaginative sympathy, concerning the sufferings of those beyond the tribal limits. Then there comes to be a national conscience. At last a human conscience is beginning to be born, though it is comparatively feeble as yet. But the ideal conscience will not stop its development even there. There was a foregleam of this newer and tenderer advance in that beautiful though trite saying of the poet Cowper,—

“I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.”

The perfect conscience will include all sentient beings,—whatever can enjoy, whatever can suffer.

A poetic and imaginative sympathy may take, I think, another step. There are men even now who have a conscience towards those forms of life that we do not think of ordinarily as sentient. They would not needlessly mar or harm a beautiful tree or flower. They feel the sense of a common life that thrills through the universe from highest to lowest,

from centre to circumference, embracing all in one broad sympathy.

Conscience, then, is the recognition of the rights and the duties springing out of these relationships. And what we may perhaps for distinction call a natural conscience—a conscience that some day perhaps the earth will attain, though very far from it yet—will recognize only those natural, those inherent, those necessary laws of cause and effect on which human welfare and happiness depend.

I have hinted to you that this sense of right and wrong springs out of our imaginative sympathy concerning the relationships in which we stand to others. We have learned to think of as right all those courses of conduct which tend to make men better, which tend to increase their general welfare. Wrong is the opposite course,—those things that take away something from the general welfare and happiness of mankind. You will note, then, that here begins to dawn the standard, the permanent, the eternal part of conscience. Here is the principle: whatever helps men is right; whatever hurts men is wrong. And the voice of God in the soul is that which whispers eternally to you and to me, Do that which helps men, refrain from that which hurts them. This is the eternal part, the changeless principle.

But you will notice that of necessity there will be perpetually varying judgments as to what course of conduct will help men and what will hurt them. I have just said that, if the world ever attains a perfectly natural conscience, it will be guided entirely by the natural laws of cause and effect. It will be governed by those things which are changeless, essential, eternal. But I need to hint to you, because this will explain many of the contradictions and conflicts, certain other forces that come in to modify and mould the judgments of men. For example, people come to believe in a

certain kind of God, and they believe that he has issued certain commands. He tells them that such and such things they may be permitted to eat, that such and such things are prohibited, that such and such days are to be devoted to certain uses, and other days are free, when they can do as they please. He commands the reading of certain books. He commands the performance of certain sacrifices, the celebration of certain ceremonies. There are certain doctrines which they must believe, and there are certain others which they must reject. These, you see, are arbitrary, outside commands. They do not stand in any natural causal relation to anybody's happiness or anybody's misery ; but if people believe there is such a God, who has issued such commands, and that he is powerful enough to execute them, and that he will execute them, why, then, of course, you will see at once that it becomes a matter of conscience with them to regard these commands, because the welfare of humanity depends on their being obeyed. But here is another people, who have an entirely different idea of God, who have another revelation, another set of commands ; and of course they are in conflict with these first,—conscientiously so. Both of them are earnest, but each is antagonizing the other.

Not only do these religious ideas come in to modify or change the growth of conscience, but governmental ideas as well. Persons are born under a despotism, a monarchy, or a republican form of government ; and they come to believe that the welfare of men is bound up with the permanence of this type of government, so they conscientiously fight for it. Somebody else believes that the welfare of man depends on entirely another kind of political organization, so he fights for that.

Not only that, but there are social ideas and customs that

dominate us. In one country, a certain set of social customs has become so large a part of the air the people breathe that they can hardly imagine anybody's being free from them. They become a part of their notions of right and wrong, and seem as if essential parts of life itself. Other persons are trained in another kind of society, and so another set of social customs and ideas becomes a part of their conscience. You see, then, how the practical judgment of men as to what is right and what is wrong is subject to perpetual modification, flux, and change. But all the time—do not lose sight of this—the eternal, the permanent sense of obligation to do that which people believe is for the good of mankind abides.

I wish now to make the matter a little more concrete and clear, and show to you how out of these conflicts of conscience come the great tragedies of the world; so I suggest to you a few historic illustrations. Of course, I need no more than mention the fact to you that there is of necessity a contradiction, a conflict, between the consciences of a lower grade of human civilization and the consciences of a higher grade. There was a time in the history of the world when slavery was a good, a blessing. It was the next step in advance of the human army of progress. It was the almost universal custom, up to a certain time in the history of the world, for armies to put to death indiscriminately all their captives. They had not risen to the grade of civilization in which it was safe for them to let them go. They would lose the fruits of their victory if they did. But there came a time when nations grew strong and had a more compact organization. And so, instead of putting their captives to death, they held them in captivity, made slaves of them,—not a very pleasant condition; but, considering that this slavery many times was not a permanency, that there were opportunities

and the hope of escape, it was something more humane than indiscriminate slaughter. So slavery was once right.

By the same law of reasoning, you would be able to say that there was a time when polygamy was right. It represented a higher step in the social order than that which preceded it. We have outgrown it, and it is now wrong. We have found a better way: therefore, that which was relatively good becomes in our higher life a positive evil.

Let us now take one of the best known illustrations in history, though perhaps it is not often used to illustrate this particular point,—the case of Socrates in Athens. We are accustomed, perhaps, to think somewhat bitterly of the people who forced the fatal hemlock to the lips of the old philosopher; and yet there is no sort of question that they were as conscientious, as earnest,—according to their light,—as devoted to the welfare of Athens, as was Socrates himself. Indeed, what were the charges that men preferred against him? He was charged with perverting the religion of the country, vitiating the character and the thoughts of the young people of the city. From the stand-point of those who believed in the older religion, this was just what he was doing. How did he justify himself? He had caught a glimpse of the larger, higher truth,—a truth that unthroneed the old gods of Olympus, and placed a grander God in the heaven of the soul. He had caught a glimpse of a larger, broader, finer humanity, and he knew right well the risk he was taking; but he believed that the result would make the risk quite worth the while. So he represented the larger, broader, finer, higher conscience that was coming, and had of necessity to be in antagonism to the older and lower conscience.

Almost precisely similar is the illustration of what has taken place here, in what we have called the modern Athens.

Take the relation in which Theodore Parker stood to his times. We may vilify as much as we please the defenders of slavery in that day, we may vilify as much as we please the men who in their prayer-meetings pleaded with the Almighty to destroy the work of the great leader ; but, if we are fair, if we are just to history, we must recognize the fact that these men were religiously earnest. They were devoted to what they believed to be the will of God and the welfare of man. It was only one of those tragedies that of necessity are born out of the conflict and struggle which means the rebirth of civilization. Parker saw the higher, the grander truth both in religion and as related to the brotherhood of humanity ; and he stood for it and fought for it with a heroism that has given him a name for all time. But the others were as conscientious as he.

There are, then, these conflicts which spring out of every step taken in progress, the old conscience fighting against the new conscience that is the foregleam and prophecy of the new age.

A similar thing comes in the experience of every man and woman, if he or she grows. Those of you who have been trained in one set of ideas and have been taken out of them into what you believe to be a higher and better thought have had this same kind of battle in your own souls. You have caught a glimpse of a finer and higher truth ; and this conscience, which you believe to be the voice of God, perhaps, has smitten and seared your soul as with the touch of lightning.

I remember the first time that I ever read an argument against one of the essential doctrines in which I had been trained. It was written by Dr. Bellows. My heart leaped to it with a wish, at any rate, that it might be true. And then for days and weeks my conscience lashed me with the

thought that I was proving myself false to God and his truth, that I was allowing my desires to interfere with the acceptance of the infallible truth. I regarded it as a possible temptation of the evil one. And so for weeks, months, and years the fight went on, rending and tearing my soul, as the New Testament tells us they were torn out of whom the evil spirits were cast. This was conscience fighting against conscience. There was no change in the voice that whispered, Do right; but there was a battle over the practical question as to which way the right lay.

Then there is another kind of conflict that I wish to note, so as to suggest how broad the field is. There are certain persons who are very conscientious as to which of two duties they shall perform. They recognize the fact that it is not possible to perform both of them; but which? They have no question as to whether they ought to do right; but it becomes a grievous problem to them to settle which of the two irreconcilable courses is right. So sometimes they are burdened after having decided according to the best light they could discover. Even then conscience will whip them for the neglect of that which they could not do. So we are sometimes victims of most irrational consciences. Learn, then, that it is not enough for you to say, I am conscientious, it is not enough for somebody to say, I was conscientious about it. A wrong-headed conscience is sometimes the very worst thing to deal with on earth, because, believing it represents eternal truth, it adds this conviction to the personal obstinacy of the man who is thus over-conscientious.

Now, at the close, I wish to note a few practical suggestions as to how we shall deal with these cases of conscience as they come up day by day.

In the first place,—and do not suspect me of any looseness of thinking in this direction,—on the peril of your soul

be sure that you obey, for the time being, your conscience. In the first place, you would better do wrong conscientiously than do right against your conscience. For he who purposely violates his conviction of right demoralizes and devastates his own soul. For the time being, then, follow your conviction of duty, whichever way it leads.

Second, in the light of what I have hinted this morning, study the facts as to the evolution of conscience, and learn to draw the distinction between the conviction that it is the voice of God bidding you do right as an authority never to be escaped and an entirely different thing, your own judgment as to what is right and best in a given set of circumstances. Remember that of necessity, in a growing world, there must be these conflicts and contradictions of opinion as to cases of conscience, as to what is right and what is wrong.

And so, in the third place, remember that your conscience, quite as much as any other part of your nature, is something to be educated, something to be trained. You will not change, you cannot change, the sense of obligation to do right; but it does not follow at all that your conviction as to what is right to-day or to-morrow is a sound and true conviction. That is simply and purely a matter of judgment, concerning which you may be as mistaken as concerning any other matter whatsoever. Your convictions as to what is right and wrong concerning religion, concerning your political action, in your business life, in all the relations in which you stand to your fellow-men,— where did they come from? Some of them you have inherited. Some of them have come to you as the result of teaching, of education. Some of them have been impressed upon you by your social surroundings and the custom of the city or town in which you live. Some of them have grown, perhaps, out of a prejudice or

even a personal dislike. But, whatever the source, you will discover it is anything but infallible. In other words, your judgment as to matters of right and wrong is just as infallible and just as fallible as your judgment about anything else. And, since this concerns the great question of the welfare and happiness of men, it is the one thing of all others concerning which you ought to be least bigoted, least set, least prejudiced. You should hold your judgment always open to revision, be always ready to find out as to whether the opinions you hold or the courses of action you are following are helping or hurting mankind ; for the one thing that is binding on you is not truth to your conviction simply, but being sure that your convictions are true. The one thing we ought to be concerned about is the consideration of the welfare of our fellow-men.

Try, then, day by day, to find out whether your opinions, your actions, are really helping the world or hurting it, and remember that the one obligation you are under is to help, and not to hurt. You are under no obligation to be consistent. You are under no obligation to hold the same opinion now that you held last year. You are under no obligation to continue doing a thing to-day because you thought it was right yesterday. You are under no obligation except to learn to do right ; and, in order that you may do that, you must use all the light you can get from any source in heaven or earth to help you to know what the right is.

And, in regard to this conflict between duties that appear to be irreconcilable, I would not have you carry a conscience that shall burden and depress. I have known people who were uncomfortable all their lives, and who had perhaps a little touch or taint of pride about it, because they thought there was merit in being so very conscientious. But a con-

science that makes you uncomfortable, miserable, and hurts and destroys the happiness of those about you, is not a good, it is an evil. Do not allow yourselves to think you are virtuous because you can think of yourselves as very conscientious. Perhaps you would better be even less conscientious in that sense. The one thing to aim at is to help the world. Do not, then, allow your souls to be burdened, if, after having decided according to the best light you had, you are haunted by a fear, a suggestion, that something has not been done. If you have done what you could, you have done all.

Will the time ever come when these conflicts and contradictions will be done away? Not in this millennium nor in the next, perhaps never, because in a world that is growing there must be this contradiction between the higher and the lower. But the conflict can be reduced to its lowest terms if the time ever comes when the world is wise enough to draw a rigid line of demarcation between the conventional conscience and the natural conscience. When we come to identify the real God and the real laws of God with the inherent natural laws of human life, human development, and human happiness, and when we are ready to relegate prejudices and arbitrary convictions, whether religious, political, or social, to their own place, then very largely, if not entirely, the conflicts of conscience will become a thing of the past.

LIVING BY THE DAY.

AT the first look, this will seem to you a very simple theme,—“Living by the Day”; and I do not propose to offer you any new, startling, or profound thoughts on the subject, but only such considerations as you are already more or less familiar with. And yet, if I could only succeed in persuading people to live by the day, how many burdens should I lift off from human shoulders! how should I add to the sum of the world’s happiness! what an enormous increase there would be in the amount of the world’s effective work, for so much is lost by memory and by dream!

And yet, says a friend, if you could only teach me to live by the day! I see the meaning of it, but the task is too difficult. How can I live by the day, when the ideals of my life are shattered and lie in fragments round my feet; when, as I look towards the morrow, I see myself passing under a cloud instead of into sunshine; when I see a future from which I would be glad to escape even by lying down to my last sleep?

Or another says: Why ask me to live by the day? To-day is sad and sorrowful; but I can escape into the past and find an hour of brightness, where I can perhaps forget the pressing evils of the present. Or I hope for something better to-morrow, or next week, or next year. The conditions of things are going to be changed. May I not enjoy at least the illusion of happiness, if happiness itself may not be found?

And some one else may suggest: Why is it that man is the inhabitant of three worlds instead of one, if he is to live only in one? Why is it that we are endowed with these marvellous faculties of memory and of anticipation, if we are not to exercise them?

All these questions, these criticisms, are pertinent, they are real ; and I shall have nothing to say by way of discrediting any of them. And yet I shall insist strongly upon the idea that the true way to live is to live in concentrating thought, intention, purpose, all our powers, on the present day.

It is indeed true that there is this wonderful world of memory and this other wonderful world of anticipation and hope ; and they have their uses without contradicting any of the principles that underlie the duty of living by the day.

Let me, at the outset, note how this matter of memory and of hope, instead of interfering with living by the day, may even lend us their assistance. I do not mean, for example, that we are not to find the happiness of life that comes to us from remembering the past. It is a wonderful power. Where is this past? Where is this world of the things that we remember,—the yesterdays, the last years, the centuries that are gone? Where are they? Somewhere stored up in brain, somewhere inaccessible to these minds of ours, that are as mysterious and inexplicable as is the Infinite Mind itself. And, indeed, we have a right to unlock the doors and enter these chambers of memory, and take comfort and joy and peace in what we can find there. The mother, for example, worn out with the care of the children, the burden of the household, the perplexities of life, the unsolved problems and the problems that seem unsolvable,—shall she not forget them a little, and go back and live over her girlhood time, the time when she was free, before there were any con-

scious tasks, any burdens more serious than the lesson that was a little hard to learn? Shall she not walk in that remembered sunshine, through those remembered fields, under those remembered skies, and be comforted and made strong?

And the man bowed under the burden of his mid-life tasks,—shall he, too, not go back? How many sweet hours come to me through this process of memory,—the playmates of the olden time, the river shimmering under the sunlight, losing itself far up northward among the hills, the song of the bobolink in the spring, the picture of the clouds floating overhead, the bursting of the apple-blooms,—these bright, sunny hours, these pictures that we can recall, how dear they are to us, how full of comfort and of peace!

And then we keep as treasures in this way all the things that have been ours. We can still climb the Alps, seeing the lake at our feet, and the snow peaks against that wonderful blue. We can still walk through the galleries, seeing the marvellous works of art, the pictures and the statuary. We are still in the cathedral of St. Peter's, not only awed by the wonder of the architecture that has heaved such a dome into the air, but listening to the monotonous chant of the priests, or the grand swelling of the organ music and the sweetness of the choral voices. All these things are ours,—ours to use, ours to rejoice in,—for our comfort, our inspiration, and our help.

Then we have a right also to anticipate and enjoy the pleasures of hope as well as the pleasures of memory. A man that is burdened and worried with the task that he has only half finished, shall he not rest himself for a moment by thinking of the satisfaction that shall come to him when it is done? and shall he not attain an added power and steadier nerve and stronger grasp of his task in the sense of this coming satisfaction? Shall not the man who is toiling across

desert sands, overpowered by the heat, blinded with the brightness,—shall he not anticipate how at last, at evening, he may reach an oasis, and sit under the palms and see the cool water at his feet? Shall we not have all these inspirations and comforts and helps that come to us through anticipation as well as memory?

I wish to refer for a moment to other uses of the past and the future that are legitimately ours. The man is not wise who does not use the past not merely for comfort and pleasure, but for instruction. He has attempted certain things, and he has failed. He will not attempt those things under the same conditions again, if he be wise. One of our humorists has said that every man makes mistakes, but only fools make the same mistake the second time. Here is the use that we ought to make of the past; and this is true not only of the past individual life, but the past of the world, the past of society, the past of our political career. People are perpetually going astray, for the simple reason that they do not learn to keep in mind the lessons of the world's memory, its history. We are constantly making social experiments that in the very nature of things cannot succeed. We are constantly trying to solve political problems in ways that are impossible of accomplishment. We are constantly engaged in trying to bring about certain reforms in ways that are utterly impracticable. Why? Because we do not remember the lessons of the social and political attempts that the world has already made, because we are not familiar with history. As men are on their march, some one comes to a path that he thinks is open; and he proclaims it as a grand discovery, and invites everybody to follow him into it, when, if he only knew the experience of the world in the years gone by, he would know that the same kind of road precisely has been attempted over and over again, and that it

is an impassable road, or, if passable, leads to no desirable result. We need, then, to use the past for instruction, the past of our own lives and the past of the world.

Then there is another use of the future which is legitimate, not only using it for the pleasure it may bring us in the way of anticipated joys, but using it to give us courage and hope, using it because it nerves the arm, because it strengthens the heart, because it makes us more capable of accomplishing the work that is given us for the present hour. If we study wisely the history of the world's achievements in the past, we shall know that over and over again the grandest causes have met with check, have been delayed, have seemed to waver and threatened to fail, but that at last concentrated effort has accomplished the grand result that for years was attempted in vain. In the midst of our present effort, we are apt to become discouraged, to say this cause is making slow progress, that another is wavering and threatening to fall through; and we are apt to lose heart, and to lose the strength of arm that we need for present effort, forgetting that this is God's world, that overhead and beneath and around us there is not only a plan, but the push of a mighty purpose, of which we are a part, and with which we can co-operate. Looking ahead in this spirit, in the light of these considerations, we can bear present burdens and reach out towards the attainment of those things that have so long eluded us. Here, then, are uses enough for the past and for the future,—uses in the way of pleasure and comfort, uses in the way of instruction and encouragement.

But, granting all this, it still remains true, it seems to me, that it is the part of a rational man to remember that in one sense there is no past, there is no future, there never has been any past, and there never will be any future. Whatever of the past is vital is so much of it as lives in the at-

tainment of the present,—lives in the thought, feeling, the impulse of this hour. All the past that is real is here. It is a part of the now, and the future never has existed. We talk sometimes of the future world, of the future life. If there be a spirit world, if those we call dead are still alive, they are not living in the future any more than we are. They are living this instant, thinking, feeling, aspiring, and climbing towards the higher now. To-morrow,—where is it?

“That golden time,— who's found it?
That ever sought to-morrow?
Cluster all hopes around it,
Without one touch of sorrow?

“Vain fancy! Sing thy sonnet,
And days from dreamland borrow;
But sun ne'er shone upon it,—
There never was to-morrow.”

The world's work, then,—all the work that ever was done, all the work that is being done, all the work that can be done,—must be done now. If we live till another sun rises after the shadow that we call night, we shall then say, “To-day,” “Now.” This flitting instant, then, is the only time that the world ever had or ever can have. The work of the world must be done now. And yet, instead of waking up to a realization of this, grasping the present opportunity, and trying to make this moment the grandest that it can possibly be, how many of us fritter it away! How many of us waste it because of a fancied past or a fancied future!

I wish to indicate to you one or two of the influences under which this waste of the only time we have goes on.

We waste it, because we remember a past failure. We sometimes think it is a virtue to throw away grand present opportunities, in order that we may show our sorrow and regret over something we did not do yesterday. But the

only legitimate use for any past, however dark, however guilty, however wrong, is not to discourage us or to destroy the present moment, but only to teach us its lesson of failure, and thrill us with the purpose of redeeming the time that is. It is not a virtue that mourns and sorrows and bewails the past, and so fritters away or loses the opportunity that is.

Bunyan, in his inimitable, pictorial way, sets forth this great fact: that the despair growing out of past failure is the one most fatal thing in all the world, not only to happiness, but to action. For, when his pilgrim on his journey from the past to the future—from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City—falls into the hands of Giant Despair, nothing is accomplished, no step is taken. Heart and hope and power, all are lost; and it is only when at last he feels in his bosom, and finds there the key called Hope, that he opens the gates to this Doubting Castle, and escapes into God's sunshine, and starts out on his journey once more.

And there are influences from the future, from anticipation, that interfere with our life-work. Men not only allow themselves to be discouraged by past failures, but they allow themselves to waste present opportunities in dreams of some better opportunity that they expect to come. I know a man—and he has plenty of companions in this—who was splendidly educated,—a man grandly endowed, a man of most unusual power. He is always going, going to do something. He is going to write a paper, he is going to write a book, he is going to achieve this, he is going to undertake that,—going, going forever to do something; and yet the years go by—and they have been going by ever since I can remember in his case—and these things that were going to be done have never yet been even begun.

I know a case of another man who has thrown his life away because he had created so grand an ideal of what he was going to make of himself that he became discouraged at the prospect, and gave it up. He made great preparation for his life-work. After graduating at college in America, he went abroad, travelled, and studied at the universities there, listened to all the great professors, did everything he could to perfect and cultivate every faculty and power he possessed, until at last he had so grand a purpose that he made up his mind that he could never do anything that was worth while in the light of that purpose ; and he has been sitting still with folded hands ever since.

So there are young men who need the lesson that this thought is fitted to give them. I know them in every direction. I have been talking with some of them recently,—young men dissatisfied with where they are. They do not like their task. They do not like their present position : it is not the one they think they are fitted for. They feel in themselves powers, capacity, for a place larger than their present position. They are restless, dissatisfied. They are neglecting their duty : they are not doing good work where they are, for the simple reason that they fancy they could do so much better work if they were only somewhere else. They occupy a clerkship, perhaps. They do the work so poorly that their wages are not advanced ; and their employer feels that he could probably engage some one without so much education, without so fine a natural endowment, at a less price, who would do as well as they are doing, and perhaps better. The way for any man to attain a larger place is to fill the present place so full that it runs over on every side. No matter how small it is, no matter how insignificant, no matter how unworthy you may think it of your brain power or culture, do the work in the place where

you are so well that people will find out that it is not good economy to keep you in it because you have manifested the ability to do more than that. No matter if your dream is true, no matter if you are capable of filling the grandest position in the world, if you are not filling the one where you are satisfactorily, if you are not doing your present work faithfully, who would trust you in a larger place? The formula is in that old statement in the Bible, "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Let us remember, then, that the work of life is to be done now and where we are, and that all the grand work that ever was done was done during the passing instant, and do not be discouraged by any past failure. Do not be so over-elated by any past success, either, as to feel yourself absolved from the present task, and do not lose yourself in any dreams of the future. The cases are not all in the story-books. It was not Alnaschar alone in the "Arabian Nights" who lost himself in such a dream of magnificent attainment in the coming time that he destroyed the very foundation on which his dream structure had been reared. People are doing it all about us. Learn, then, the lesson that Longfellow has to teach us in those simple words of his, so simple, so familiar, because so pertinent that they have often been quoted, and will be quoted again and again:—

"We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

"The mighty pyramids of stone
That, wedge-like, cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

“The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

“The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.”

And, then, two other stanzas from Longfellow will clinch this thought,— that the present hour is the one in which all achievements are accomplished:—

“Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

“Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain
And one boundless reach of sky.”

Not only is to-day’s duty the only one we are ever called upon to perform, but we learn that all the happiness the world ever has or ever can have is the happiness of the passing moment. Yet is it not true that, in nine cases out of ten, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, people do not make the most of the present time for their own happiness or those around them, but fritter and waste their joys because of memory and of hope? How many men will confess that they are happy? How many women? How many are there who do not expect some time to be happy? And on what grounds do they expect it? As Pope, the poet, says,—

“Man never is, but always to be blest.”

Take the case of the boy. Not quite contented with the playthings he has to-day, he longs for something else. He gets it: it is commonplace in five minutes, and he is not happy, because he desires something farther. Then this same boy is not quite happy with being a boy. He wishes to grow up and be a man. As soon as he is a man, he turns round and looks back and longs for his childhood once more, and thinks what a blessed, perfect, peaceful time that was.

So how many people there are who are not quite content in the house that they at present occupy! It does not meet their ideal. They do not care to put themselves out to better it, because they say it is no use to make themselves specially comfortable in this nest,—they do not propose to settle there. They will get along discontented, uncomfortable, a little miserable, in anticipation of having everything to their mind. When they get the house they were expecting to occupy, they have perhaps lost the faculty of being contented and at peace. They forget that happiness is an internal disposition, and that it does not depend upon location. It does not depend on the kind of house-walls that surround us; for there is many and many a person in this city, living in an elegant home, whose heart is sore, who is burdened and troubled with things that no costly house, no exquisite works of art, no fine furniture, can remove, proving — and this is the one point I have in mind — that happiness does not come from these things. There are persons in this city who would exchange their mansions for the humblest cottage, if they could only have heart-wounds healed.

Some years ago, when I was abroad, I met a man with his wife and daughter; and his case illustrates the point I have in mind. They had wanted to go abroad for years, but the man never thought he could take the time or spend the

money. He imagined himself so important to his business that he thought the city would stop if he went away; so he kept grinding at his work day after day, week after week, year after year, until at last he was completely broken down, and ordered abroad by his physician. And this dream of travel had turned into this kind of disappointment. He was wandering from city to city and bath to bath all over Europe, miserable, restless, unhappy, under the physician's orders, longing for the time when he should be restored sufficiently so that he could go home again.

The great majority of business men do not take a vacation. They cannot stop. They cannot leave their business. They have not taken time to develop any resources, so that they could enjoy anything outside of business routine. They are making money, and perpetually postponing the time when they are going to stop, going to rest, going to enjoy themselves, going to take an outing. They keep on, lured and deluded by this dream, until a touch of apoplexy or a break-down of the nervous system lays them on the shelf, with their dream unrealized, with no capacity longer to enjoy the pleasures and comforts that they have.

Let us wake up to the idea, then, that no man ever enjoyed anything in his life except the passing instant, and that, if we are ever to find any comfort, happiness, pleasure, in this world, the time for us to begin, so far as circumstances will allow, is to-day.

One other thought I wish to suggest,—this from a contrary point of view and by way of comfort. The only burden that anybody is ever called upon to bear, the only trouble he is ever called upon to face, is really the trouble of to-day, the trouble of the passing hour, the burden of the moment. I suppose it to be true that the larger part of our miseries and sorrows and difficulties of every kind are all in

the air, always have been, and always will be. Most of people's sufferings are sufferings that they have never met, only those that they anticipate, that they expect to meet. But a friend may say to me: So far as I can conclude from the present condition of affairs, such or such an evil is almost certain to come to-morrow or next week or next year. How can I get rid of it? How can I help anticipating it?

In the first place, I appeal to your own experience as to whether it be not true that in nearly every case the things that have happened that have really troubled you have not been the things you did not expect to happen? How many times have you looked ahead, anticipating a definite evil, and had that particular evil come in the form in which you expected it? Is it not almost always true that it is the unexpected that happens in these things as well as others? And is it not true that your elaborate preparations for meeting a difficulty, for bearing a sorrow, were not needed for that difficulty or sorrow, because conditions had changed, and it was some other burden you had to bear, some other difficulty you had to face, not the one you had so long anticipated?

At any rate, this is true. Suppose there is a difficulty coming to-morrow: the man who carries only to-day's burden, and so avoids being crushed and wearied, he is the one who is strong enough to carry to-morrow's burden. The man who does not confuse and worry his brain by solving any other problems than those that face him to-day is the man who is in the best condition for solving the problem that will face him to-morrow. So, in any case, it is to-day's burden, to-day's difficulty, that we are called on to bear.

Do not carry as a burden the failure of yesterday or last year. People say, If I had it to do over again, I would do it differently. No: you would not. If you had it to do

over again now, in the light of present experience, of course you might; but, placed in precisely the same circumstances as yesterday or last week, with the same light on your pathway, the chances are that you would take the same step that you did take. Why worry over it? You cannot reach or touch it. Learn this lesson,—to go on. We have eternity to work in and the Infinite to help us. There is no mistake that cannot be rectified, there is no evil that may not be outlived. There is no difficulty that cannot be solved or put under our feet.

As a closing suggestion, then, let me hint a word as to being content with the present condition of things. I have preached to you many times the gospel of discontent, and I shall preach it to you a great many times more. No man, no woman, ought to be satisfied with present attainments either as to work or character. But along with this divine discontent, that makes us long to be and do more, is the duty of being content with to-day as to-day. For what are we? Finite minds growing in an infinite universe. We shall never be done, never be through; but, if we do the best we can each hour, we are doing all that could be expected at that hour, and ought to take satisfaction in it.

Suppose I am climbing a mountain, and I am half-way up. Let me sit down and get my breath. The valley is beneath me; the beautiful landscape, the water, the grassy fields and woods, are at my feet. What if the peak is up yonder, and I know that I must be up and on to attain it? It is sweet and pleasant here. Let me enjoy this for a moment. Let me be content with where I am, as being simply so far on the journey. I shall be stronger in a moment to reach the height that lies before me. This is the lesson. Paul, you will remember, says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." He was not born contented,

it had not come to him by accident. "I have learned,"—learned the lesson and meaning of life, learned that to-day is a part of an eternal process, learned that to-day is what might be expected as a stage in that journey towards the better. Learn, then, to be contented with this stage as a stage, with this step as a step, with this stair as a stair. Learn in the strength of this content to take the next step, and so on and on.

I cannot better close my sermon than by reading to you again what I have already read to you this morning, the hymn that we have sung together. It has always been a favorite of mine, and it carries the lesson of the whole theme.

"One by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall :
Some are coming, some are going ;
Do not strive to grasp them all.

"One by one thy duties wait thee ;
Let thy whole strength go to each :
Let no future dreams elate thee ;
Learn thou first what these can teach.

"One by one, bright gifts from heaven,
Joys are lent thee here below :
Take them readily when given ;
Ready, too, to let them go.

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee ;
Do not fear an armèd band :
One will fade as others greet thee,—
Shadows passing through the land.

"Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task to do or bear :
Luminous the crown and holy,
If thou set each gem with care."

HOW TO DIE.

Does it seem strange to any, perhaps incongruous, that on this June Sunday, in the midst of a growing world, where everything is thrilling with life, I should take for a topic a subject like "How to Die"? And yet the beauty of June, and the joy that our hearts feel in it, are not interfered with because we know they are to be followed by November; for we know that after the November there is to be another June. But, though there were to be no other June, yet, if we could so consider the subject of November as to take away something of the gloom and the shadow that are apt to haunt us in connection with the thought that all that is beautiful and all that we love must fade, even then a consideration of it might possibly add to the brightness of the day, might possibly help us even to enjoy more keenly the glory of spring. So, if I can take away, by any considerations that I may offer, something of the foreboding, something of the shadow, something of the dread of dying, may I not put it within your power to find even a sweeter, keener, more restful relish in those things of life that are so desirable, and that we clasp to our arms with such a tender sense of possession?

It is a purpose like this that I have in mind. We have inherited — I cannot go at any length into the causes of it — a series of fancies, of forebodings, of dark traditions, that surround the thought of the transition through which we

must all pass from this life to what we hope is to be another, that fill our minds with gloom. Death is figured to us under every possible aspect of horror. He is the shapeless, headless image, son of Sin and Satan, who stands by the portal of hell, as Lucifer starts out on his journey in search of the new created earth. He stands there, gloating with the awful anticipation that his famine, his hunger for human life, by the ministry of sin and evil, is going at last to be filled. We have pictured death under the figure of skull and crossbones ; we have made him a skeleton with scythe and hour-glass, and brandishing a dreadful dart ; we have clothed him with all sorts of horrors,—until, at the very mention of his name, we think only of decay, of pain, of separation, of everything from which the loving heart as well as the living flesh shrinks.

Let us see if we can find some other way of looking at death, and try to discover what is the reasonable method of considering this inevitable fact in every human career.

Believing, as I do, that death is not the end of life, but only an incident in it, it seems to me pre-eminently fitting that I should close this series of sermons on "Helps for Daily Living" by a consideration of the question "How to Die."

At the outset, then, let us dwell for a little while on the alternative. If it were not death, since we are here, then what would it have to be? We shrink sometimes from a disagreeable fact without stopping to consider whether the alternative of that fact might not be something quite as disagreeable, if not more so. Suppose, for instance, that I could have conferred upon me at this moment the gift of physical immortality here on this planet, or the privilege of living here as long as the planet should endure : unless there were conferred upon me the gift of immortal youth at the

same time, it would be something unspeakably horrible to grow old, decrepit, to find my faculties fading, one after another, and still not have the power to die, not be able to rid myself of the growing burden of weakness and of pain.

But suppose, along with the gift of immortality, I should also have conferred upon me, and upon me alone, the gift of eternal youth. Then what? Why, then, it seems to me, the alternative would be hardly less endurable. I, indeed, might be young, with capacity and possibility of enjoyment, of a keen relish for the beauty of sky and the delights of earth; and yet I should pass through an experience, only intensified beyond expression, such as many who had not my prolonged existence on earth had passed through. One after another those I love would go, and I should find myself by and by with only half a dozen persons that I knew in my childhood or youth. Then there would be five, four, three, two, and then one; and at last I must see that one go and I be left alone, compelled to make new acquaintances, or else to wander like the Wandering Jew, one of the most grawsome and horrible imaginations of all ages, alone and homeless in the world,—to become an antiquated curiosity, the representative of a long-past age. Why, since the very meaning, the very heart and soul of life, is the companionship of people for whom we care, it seems to me that under these conditions any one of us would pray for death as he never prayed for life,—pray to go with a friend. Think me not irreverent when I say I would take my chances rather to go anywhere with a friend than to stay here under such conditions. Hell itself might be conceived of as endurable with a friend, yet not even heaven without one.

Take another supposition. Suppose all of us who are alive on earth could have immediately conferred upon us

the gift of continued existence here on our planet. What then? Why, we would set all the bells ringing, we would be jubilant and glad for a while. But let the years go on, and by and by the world would become full, with no more room for any more people. Then no more marriages, no more homes, no more little children, none of the laughter and joy and wonder of childish lives growing up around our feet. A world full of grown people! But what next? After a while, we would exhaust the planet: we would see everything that was to be seen, we would do everything that anybody could do, we would learn everything that anybody could learn, we would go through all experiences that anybody could understand or appreciate. And then what? Think of yourself snow-blocked at some way-station, and finding a small cottage or tavern where you could rest and keep warm and wait! Then think of yourself as compelled to stay there for an indefinite time! You would read all the books, you would do everything you could think of to pass away the time; but then a day would come when a prison even in exchange would be glad relief, so weary would you be of it all. So, I take it, that, even if we could have immortality here on these terms, we should become so weary of it at last that it would be unendurable. The only thing that could make such a dream as this bearable would be that in some way we might be endowed with faculties and powers to visit other planets, to visit other earths, to move through the deeps of space. But that, we know, would be physically impossible, clothed with such bodies as we now possess. It is conceivable, scientifically perfectly conceivable, that we might be endowed with faculties and powers adapting us to the doing of just this; but a necessary condition of that would be just this "horrible" thing that we call death. We must get rid of this body first, must be clothed upon with some other kind of body.

I cannot, then, think of any alternative to dying, as I consider it carefully and look over the world, that seems to me in the least attractive. So I am brought face to face with this question : If we believe in God, are we not forced to the conclusion that, however we understand it or do not understand it, death must somehow be a good and blessed thing, and not an evil ? If there be wisdom in this universe controlling and guiding it, then that wisdom knows best. If there be power, then that power cannot be hindered. If there be love, then that love desires the best. Such a being as that would not, could not, appoint to any of his children anything that in its nature was necessarily evil ; and death has been appointed to every one of his children. It seems to me, then, that, if we cherish, if we dare fold to our hearts this trust, we must take along with it that which is its inevitable corollary,—the trust that death, also, is a good thing and not an evil thing.

I ask you to bear with me now while I consider a few of the things that have intensified the natural fear of dissolution.

One of the first things is an inherited tradition as to the origin and cause of death. One of the foolish and utterly baseless fancies of the Hebrews was that death came into the world as the result of sin ; that, if Adam had not transgressed at the outset, then there would have been no such thing as dying. But we know that this is purely a fancy, and that death, whatever else we may think about it, is a natural and necessary incident of our career, created as a part of the original plan by the very One who preordained the fact of birth.

Death, then, is not a finality, not an end. We are not to think of it as a sign of the wrath of God, as his laying his hand upon us in the way of punishment. It is nothing of the sort. We have been haunted by this idea which we

have inherited from the old theology. Some of us who think we are rid of the last shred of that old theology still have somewhere hidden away in brain or nerve the haunting images and shadows of this old idea. So, when we think of death, we think of ourselves as perhaps criminals, under penalty, led into the presence of the judge to receive our sentence ; and this suggests the prison, the scaffold, the black cap, and the execution. But these ideas belong to a conception of the universe, of the government of the universe, and our relation to God, which is utterly baseless.

Then it seems to me that we allow ourselves to be troubled in a way for which there is no foundation by the anticipation of pain as accompanying death. We talk about the struggle, the death struggle, the death agony, the last keen pain and anguish ; and yet I verily believe that there is not a person here this morning who has not suffered, over and over again, a dozen, perhaps a hundred, times more than any one of you is ever likely to suffer in the process of death. Study and experience and watching by death-beds has convinced me of one fact,—I believe it to be a fact, I believe that almost every educated physician, as the result of wide experience, would agree with me,—that the act of death is generally painless. There is pain, there is suffering, in the disease that leads up to it ; but there is suffering in those diseases from which we recover. There is a natural process of anaesthesia in the approach to the moment of death, so I believe that almost always it is simply falling asleep. Though we stand by the side of a friend who is dying, and watch the involuntary muscular movement, the contraction of the brow, the quivering of the lip,—signs that seem to us to indicate pain,—if we could really know, there is hardly a question that, in almost all cases, these movements are merely nervous, muscular, automatic, unconscious. They do not

mean that there is any such suffering as we are apt to think. So I believe that in most cases we have suffered more a dozen times over, even in the dreams that have come to us in our sleep, than we shall ever suffer in dying.

Then is it not true that most of us are haunted by a sort of grawsome and uncanny fancy connected with the grave? I think I should be rendering humanity a service if I could only get these fancies, these imaginations, completely out of people's minds. My childhood was spent close by a cemetery, so that it was one of the most familiar objects of those days; but I know that I was always haunted with a certain imaginary horror in the thought of burial. Is it not true that sometimes we stand by an open grave and have a sense of suffocation, or smothering, at the thought that we some time must be placed under the sod? And yet how shrewd in its humor as well as in its sense was that word of Socrates, who, when his friends asked him how they should bury him, answered, Bury me in any way you please, if you can only catch me! I do not expect to be buried. We have worn three, or four, or five, or six complete human bodies that are not ours now. Why not suffer from the thought as to what has become of them? They are buried somewhere, or passed into grass and flowers and trees. I do not expect to suffer any more from this one being buried than I suffer already from any one of them. Let us put away from us, then, all these artificial horrors and imaginations. I think this matter of burial is made a matter of peculiar fear by our still barbaric burial customs. I have no time to go into this subject now; but, if I had, I should have a good deal to say, a good many earnest protests to utter. I think in the matter of burial and the associations surrounding it we are not yet half civilized.

Again, we are haunted still, as Hamlet was, by the fear of

that "something after death." What? If we believed, as we have been taught for centuries, that this life is only a probation, and that when we have crossed the dead line our conditions for good or ill are fixed forever, then, indeed, we might tremble. I wonder that those who hold these ideas do not tremble more than they do. I remember persons who have come within the range of my pastoral experience in past years, who have been generally the noblest, sweetest, most refined, most sensitive persons, who carried a year-long horror in the thought that possibly the hope they cherished of the safety of their own souls was a mistake, so that they looked upon the thought of death with terror, lest they should wake up to find that the lurid cloud of God's wrath still overhung their souls. But we do not believe that any longer. We believe that the same God, the same law, the same right, the same wrong, the same possibility of going downward or going upward, that we find here, will be found over there.

I do not believe that there is anything, then, about death that in the least changes our characters, our natures, our possibilities, our tendencies, or sets us in any different relation to God, any more than there was about going to sleep last night and waking up this morning. Five minutes after death we are what we were five minutes before death; and it is the same God, the same universe, the same laws, the same conditions, the same possibilities there as here. Let us, then, put aside that haunting fear. If you are not afraid of to-morrow, then you ought not to be afraid of the to-morrow of death. The inexorable judgment, the conditions that attach to our characters and actions, which have followed us from birth until to-day, will follow us from to-day into to-morrow. One and the same law governs the matter of our passing into the next world, as we call it, and this.

But many liberals who have put that fear away are still haunted by another fear. I know many tender, loving souls who shrink from going out into that other life. Why? Because it seems to them like leaving a cosey home. Here is a bright fire, and we sit round it with our friends. We can touch hands, we can speak to each other. There are associations and companionships here; and people shrink from leaving them, as they would shrink from being put out of such a home as I have pictured into the dark ways of the night, in a strange land, not knowing which way to go nor what the next step would be. So I think there are persons who dread going out into that great world alone. Who is over there? Whom shall we meet? What kind of a place will it be? It seems so desolate, so vast; and they turn from the thought, and rush clinging back to the friends here, as a frightened child rushes to grasp the skirts of its mother.

We must learn to trust. We lived before we became conscious of it. When we came into this world, we found ourselves in the hands of loving, tender care. I do not believe that a God who provides such a reception for us as we had here will leave us without as good a reception when we go away. All of us have friends over there. I hope they know all about it, and are getting ready for us. I believe, at any rate, that the infinite tenderness and care will guard us and help us. It seems to me that we need right here to get rid of our inherited notions as to the great gulf between life here and life over yonder. People have apparently thought that life, if there is to be one there, is utterly distinct and separate from this, unlike it. Why do you think so? Because we have our heads full of the pictures of traditional angels with wings. Is there any sense in thinking of people's wearing wings over there? It is utterly incongruous, a part of the mythology of the past, absurd on the very face of it. We

think of them as dressed in long robes, until they suggest to us nothing but the ghosts that frightened our childish imaginations. Is there any reason for thinking of them in this way? Not in the least. We talk about cherubim and seraphim with faces so bright that we cannot look upon them without being dazzled. Is there anything but poetry in that thought? Is a person spiritually better or morally higher by being turned into a being upon whom one cannot look with open eyes? Let us get rid of all these conventional notions, and think of the people over there as real folk, just like ourselves, just as human, just as real, just as companionable. I would not wish to go if I thought otherwise.

Let us, then, get rid of all these hauntings about Death as a spectre, and think of him as God's angel. What does angel mean? Merely a messenger, merely somebody sent on an errand, who need not be dressed in white nor ornamented with wings. To be a messenger is to be an angel.

I wish to close this part of my sermon by reading to you a suggestion of the kind of thought you should hold about death. It is by Mr. Edward Rowland Sill:—

“What if some morning, when the stars were paling,
And the dawn whitened, and the east was clear,
Strange peace and rest fell on me from the presence
Of a benignant Spirit standing near;

“And I should tell him, as he stood beside me:
‘This is our Earth, most friendly Earth and fair;
Daily its sea and shore through sun and shadow
Faithful it turns, robed in its azure air.

“There is blest living here, loving and serving,
And quest of truth, and serene friendships dear;
But stay not, Spirit! Earth has one destroyer,—
His name is Death. Flee, lest he find thee here!’

“ And what if then, while the still morning brightened
 And freshened in the elm the summer’s breath,
Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel,
 And take my hand, and say, ‘My name is Death.’ ”

With this thought, then, as to what death is, I turn to consider for a moment a few things bearing on the method of getting ready to die. How shall we prepare for it?

I would not have you trouble your minds for one single instant with any of the old ideas as to getting ready for death. Dying is easy enough: it is living that I have found to be hard,—living ideally, nobly, truly. I find more trouble in living in one single day than I ever expect to find in dying.

What shall we do, then, in getting ready for death? The first thing — and a very commonplace thing it is — is to live rightly, healthfully; for a very large part of that which makes death hard, to our thinking, is the pain that precedes and accompanies it. A large part of the suffering that precedes and accompanies death, in most instances, is the result of our own careless or wilful breaking of the laws of health before we come to die. As Bryant sings of his old man,—

“ No chronic tortures racked his aged limb,
 For luxury and sloth had nourished none for him.”

If we were perfectly healthy, I think the most of us would grow old and die as naturally as a leaf fades in the fall. It would be as quiet a process as the sunset. Most of the storm and trouble linked with it are the results of our own thoughts and words and deeds.

The second suggestion I would make is that we make up our minds to die but once, and to die all at once when the time comes, and not be twenty or thirty or forty years about it. I think the most of us die in imagination over and over

again, and suffer a great deal more in the process than we shall in the actual fact when we come to face it. Suppose Damocles's sword is hanging over my head, and I know it. It is going to fall only once. I cannot prevent it, and I cannot reach it to take it down. I do not know when it is going to fall; but let me go about my business. It does not concern me, since I cannot help myself. Let us leave that out of mind, and only see to it how we live; and the matter as to how we are to die will take care of itself.

Then, in the third place, I think that the sorrows that accompany death, and that we link with the thought of it, are sometimes keenest of all because we have done or said certain things, or we have not done or said certain things, that touched the person who is gone. The keenest pang about the fact of death with a great many people, if they would unbosom themselves and tell the secrets of their hearts, would be certain remembrances. I did not speak such words as I ought to have spoken while my friend could hear me. I did not tell that friend how dear he was, how I loved him. I did not make him know how large a part of my life he was, how I depended on him. If I could only tell him now! If I had only told him then, it would have made his life so much brighter, so much cheerier. Or we remember bitter, spiteful words spoken, that we would give so much if we could take back; and we wonder if, even there on the other side, he remembers it. We wonder if it remains a tiny, bitter drop even in his cup of bliss.

The way, then, for us to get ready to die, as it seems to me, is to begin this minute — not thinking much about death, except as an inevitable fact somewhere in the future — to live just as we shall wish we had lived; speak to-day the words that we shall wish we had spoken if some friend dies to-day and goes beyond our reach; do the things we shall

wish we had done ; love so that the living shall understand our love. Let them know how much they are to us. Let them taste the sweet comfort of it as we go along.

Death is either one of two things. Let us for a moment consider it under its very worst aspect. If it is the end of life, if none of those who have lived on this planet are living now, if we must join this great army of silence, then at the very worst it is only sleeping. It will not be pain. There will be no regret, there will be nothing. If not that, then it certainly is this other thing that I have spoken of and that I believe. And if it is that, then no words can overpicture it, no poet can oversing it, no music can oversuggest it. Why, sometimes I have such an intense feeling of curiosity about that other life ! And yet I do not want to leave here until my time comes. But I am glad to think that, when I do leave here, I shall not go away beyond the possibility of knowing how this dear old world that I love so much is getting on. There is only one century that I would rather be an inhabitant of than the present one, and that is the next. I do not care to live in any one that is past, but I would like to see the next one. I would like to see how some of these movements that are going on will come out,—what will be the changes in the social, the religious, the political life ; what the next step in discovery, in conquest of this wonderful earth of ours will be. And, if the end is not eternal silence, I expect to know. I expect to keep the run of these movements, even if I go to some distant planet. If I am engaged in work that will take me to a distance, I will get the news, or I will come back again now and then and see for myself. If that theory is true, just think of it for a moment ! How would you enjoy seeing gathered in some great hall to-day the company of all the immortals that have distinguished the history of our race by their physical,

their intellectual, their moral, or their spiritual glories? How would you like to look upon the face of Shakspere, to see if Dante has got rid of that sadness that he wore, to talk with Goethe, to hear the music of Mozart and Mendelssohn? If this theory is true, we shall meet all these: we shall find them, and so have in our grasp all the past of the earth and watch the growth of all the future. No wonder that Socrates' mind kindled at the thought, and he said, "If this be so, then let me die again and again,"—if this be the condition.

Such, then, being to my mind the best way of getting ready to die, I wish to close by reading to you a poem, the authorship of which I do not know, but which seems to state in beautiful words this attitude in which we ought to stand towards the question of death:—

"If I were told that I must die to-morrow,
That the next sun
Which sinks should bear me past all fear and sorrow
For any one,
All the fight fought and all the journey through,
What should I do?

"I do not think that I should shrink or falter,
But just go on
Doing my work, nor change, nor seek to alter
Aught that is gone;
But rise and move and love and smile and pray
For one more day.

"And, lying down at night for a last sleeping,
Say in that ear
Which hearkens ever, 'Lord, within thy keeping,
How should I fear?
And, when to-morrow brings Thee nearer still,
Do Thou Thy will.'

"I might not sleep, for awe; but peaceful, tender,
My soul would lie

All the night long ; and, when the morning splendor
 Flashed o'er the sky,
 I think that I could smile, could calmly say,
 ' It is His day.'

" But if a wondrous hand from the blue yonder
 Held out a scroll
 On which my life was writ, and I with wonder
 Beheld unroll
 To a long century's end its mystic clew,
 What should I do ?

" What could I do, O blessed Guide and Master,
 Other than this,—
 Still to go on as now, not slower, faster,
 Nor fear to miss
 The road, although so very long it be,
 While led by Thee ?

" Step by step, feeling Thou art close beside me,
 Although unseen ;
 Through thorns, through flowers, whether tempest hide Thee
 Or heavens serene ;
 Assured Thy faithfulness cannot betray,
 Nor love decay.

" I may not know, my God : no hand revealeth
 Thy counsels wise ;
 Along the path no deepening shadow stealeth ;
 No voice replies
 To all my questioning thoughts, the time to tell ;
 And it is well.

" Let me keep on abiding and unfearing
 Thy will always,
 Through a long century's ripe fruition
 Or a short day's.
 Thou canst not come too soon ; and I can wait,
 If Thou come late."





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